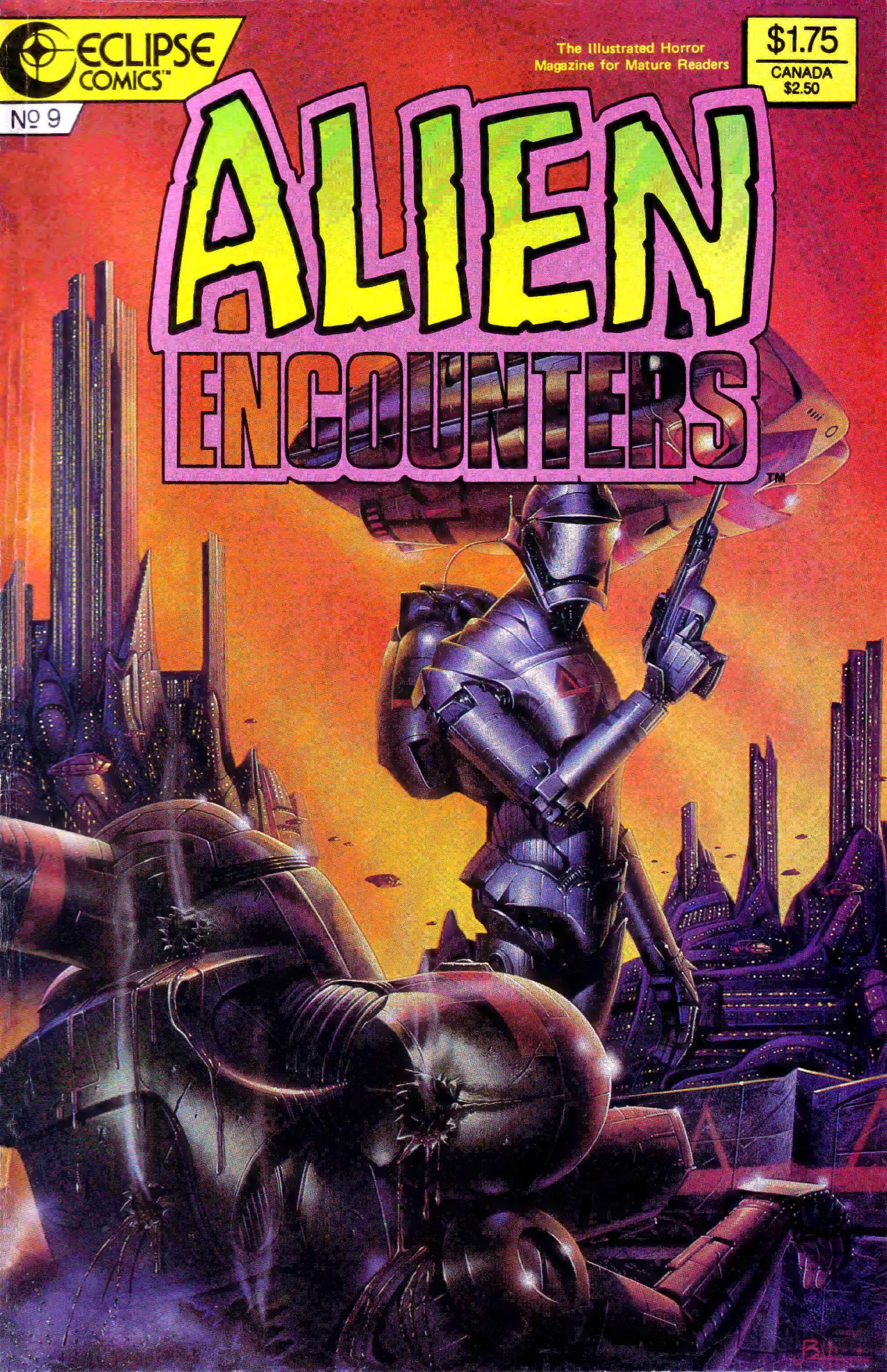
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ON THE RACKS

SCOUT no. 12
Ross enters the Norad missile base, which has been taken over by Doody's bizarre religious cult. Plus, "Monday, the Eliminator!"

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Four tales of strange encounters, led off by Bruce Jones' and John Bolton's "The Conquered."

AIRBOY 7 & 8
Only 50¢ Davy is kidnapped by his own people! A werewolf is on the loose! When Hirota and Valkyrie find out, they set out on a commando-style rescue attempt.

ZOONIVERSE no. 2
See the KREN PATROL's close shave during a timesling in their pursuit of the elusive courier!

LUGER no. 1
Your dreams come true as Bruce Jones, Bo Hampton and Tom Yeates combine their talents to introduce a broken-down soldier of fortune, a psychopathic beauty, and a missing British heiress.

GIANT-SIZE MINI COMICS no. 2
The comics medium is stretched to the breaking point as mini comics' finest talents are let loose in a full-size book.

CLINT no. 2
It's "Magnum Farce," the sizzling conclusion to the micro-series! Thrills, chills and spills as only the mohawked midget can deliver!

THE NEW WAVE no. 9
First full-size issue on deluxe Baxter paper! Super powers square off against magic as the Heap and the New Wave try to overcome the priestesses of Avalon!

MR. MONSTER'S TRUE CRIME no. 2
Doc Stearn hosts his second issue of rare true crime stories by all-time great Jack Cole!

WHODUNNIT? no. 2
Murder in the animation business draws Jay (Crossfire) Endicott to investigate "Who Slew Kangaroo?" WIN $1000 if you're the first to figure it out!

ADOLESCENT RADIOACTIVE BLACK BELT HAMSTERS in 3-D no. 3
Tom Sutton illustrates this eye-popper in the Hamsters' third 3-D book. Written by Don Chin, the Hamster King himself!

CHAMPIONS no. 3
The Champions go after the two remaining soul-shards, only to find DEMON and Malice in the way!

REID FLEMING, WORLD'S TOUGHEST MILKMAN no. 1
ALL NEW! Reid is threatened with the loss of his job should he damage one more milktruck. Not to be missed!

THE NEW DNAgents no. 14
Trouble abounds as Amber loses the ability to fly, while Sham loses the all-important ability to think!

KITZ 'N' KATZ no. 4
The krazines kontinues as the katz try to pep up Kozy's ice-cream kone business by erekting a giant statue!

CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THAT STUFF: Looks like it's time for more tell-all revelations about Famous Comic Book Professionals. As usual, the only rules are: 1) It's gotta be true, swelp me and 2) It cannot be an indictable offense.

SEAN DEMING: This Eclipse Editor *(New Wave* and *Champions)* and writer *(Naive Interdimensional Commando Koalas)* is learning to ride a unicycle! Every evening after work he rides this thing around the Post Office parking lot—and yesterday he actually made it around the block! What a guy! But seriously, folks, that unicycle is gonna come in very handy when they finally pull his driver's license for speeding. (Ooops, wasn't supposed to mention indictable offenses, was i?)

BRUCE JONES AND APRIL CAMPBELL: They live with a pet iguana, and a lovely tarantula! Also two cute little dogs, and two even cuter daughters. Truth to tell, cute daughters are more common in the comics industry than pet tarantulas or i would have mentioned the daughters first. Other Bruce and April Secrets: a strange clock that contains a polarized face which changes colours constantly, a collection of old movie lobby cards to die for, and a Lionel train set-up that only comes out at Christmas.

ROY AND DANN THOMAS: If you thought the Jones-Campbell household was well-equipped with pets, you ought to see the Thomas household! Parrots, rabbits, gerbils, cats, hamsters—you name it, they have it—by the breeding pair and multiplying family full! I remember that once, many years ago when Roy first moved to California from New York, he mentioned in print that he owned 42 very large cartons of books. Now he also owns the equivalent tonnage in pet animals.

TY TEMPLETON: *New Wave* inker and creator of *Stig's Inferno,* Ty Templeton is also a "media personality." Last year he temporarily gave up cartooning to work as a late night live television host on CITY TV in Toronto. Right now he and his former co-host, Bob Segarini, are disk jockeying on Q107 FM radio in Toronto, but that still leaves time for comics in Ty's schedule. Their station plays "album oriented rock" but Ty promises to stick in a Fats Domino cut now and then just to shake the folks up.

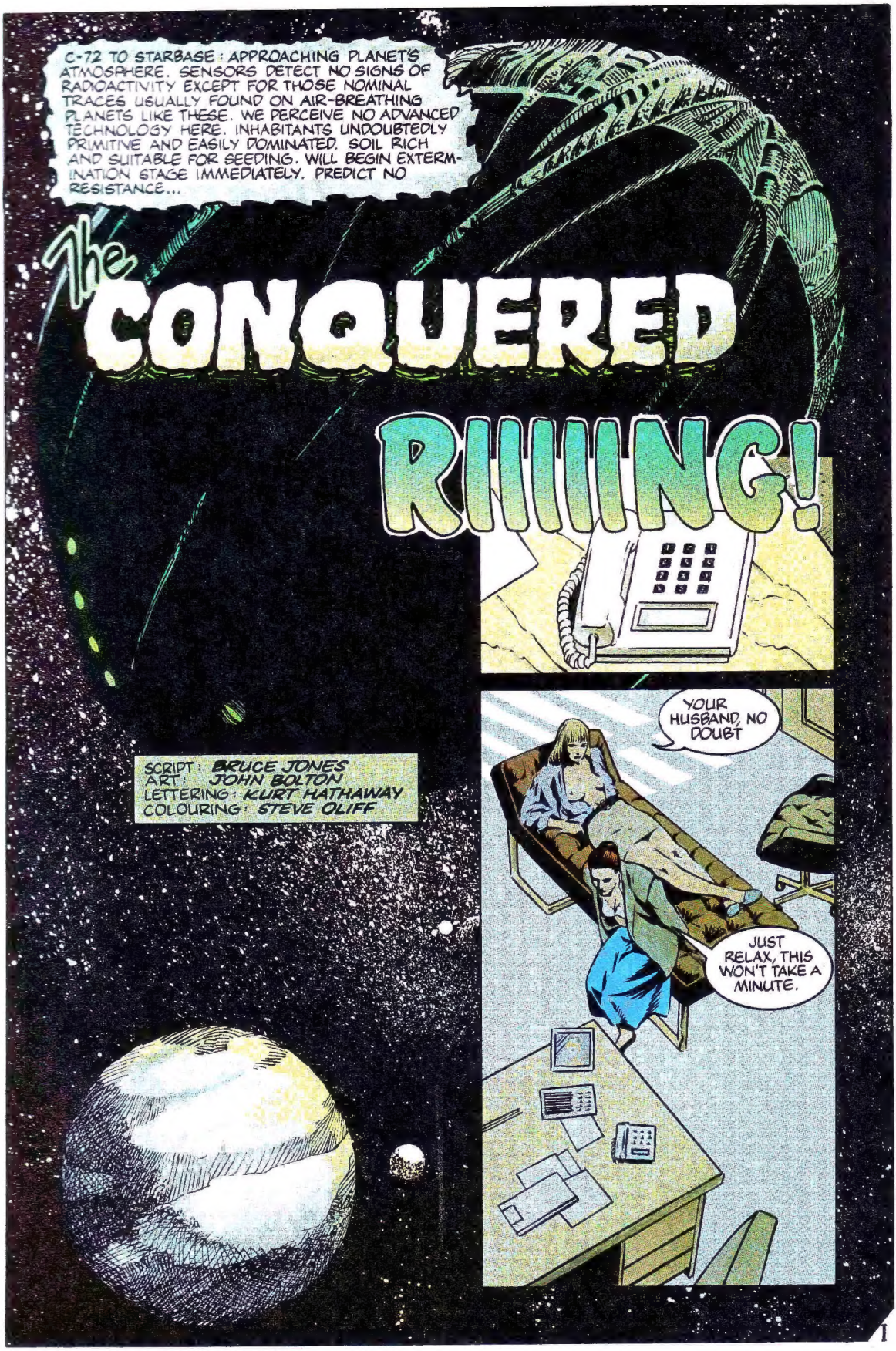
MARV WOLFMAN: Here's an update on The Scribe—his new home has a swimming pool! This is a just reward for all the writing he's done over the years, don't you think? Horatio Alger would have loved it. Marv is working on getting a California tan now. He is keeping his New York accent, however.

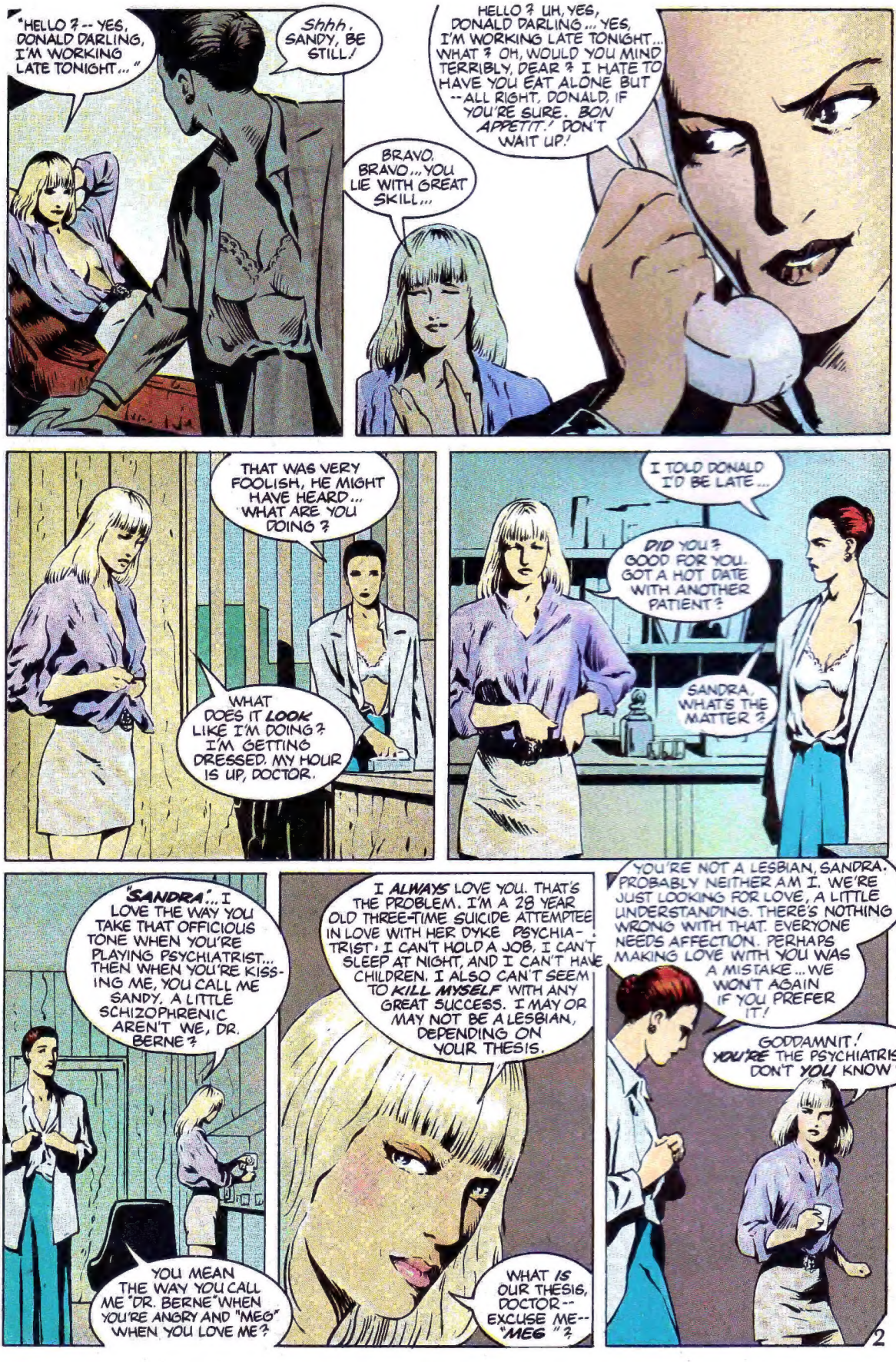
DAVIS BOSWELL: The creator of *Reid Fleming, World's Toughest Milkman* is self-described "Concertgebouw junkie." As he explains it, the Concertgebouw is an orchestra from Amsterdam with classical traditions reaching back to 1880, when their hall was built. Because it is architecturally unique (a huge free-standing stone hall inside another, larger structure), it has acoustic properties found nowhere else on earth. Only four major musical directors have led the Concertgebouw during its 100 year history, and the best of those conducted there for over half a century. David says he buys every recording of their performances he can, and is even in the market for rehearsal tapes. He has hopes to one day travel to Amsterdam to hear a live performance.

Okay, that's it for Major Weirdness Behind the Comics this month, kids. See ya down the road a piece . . .

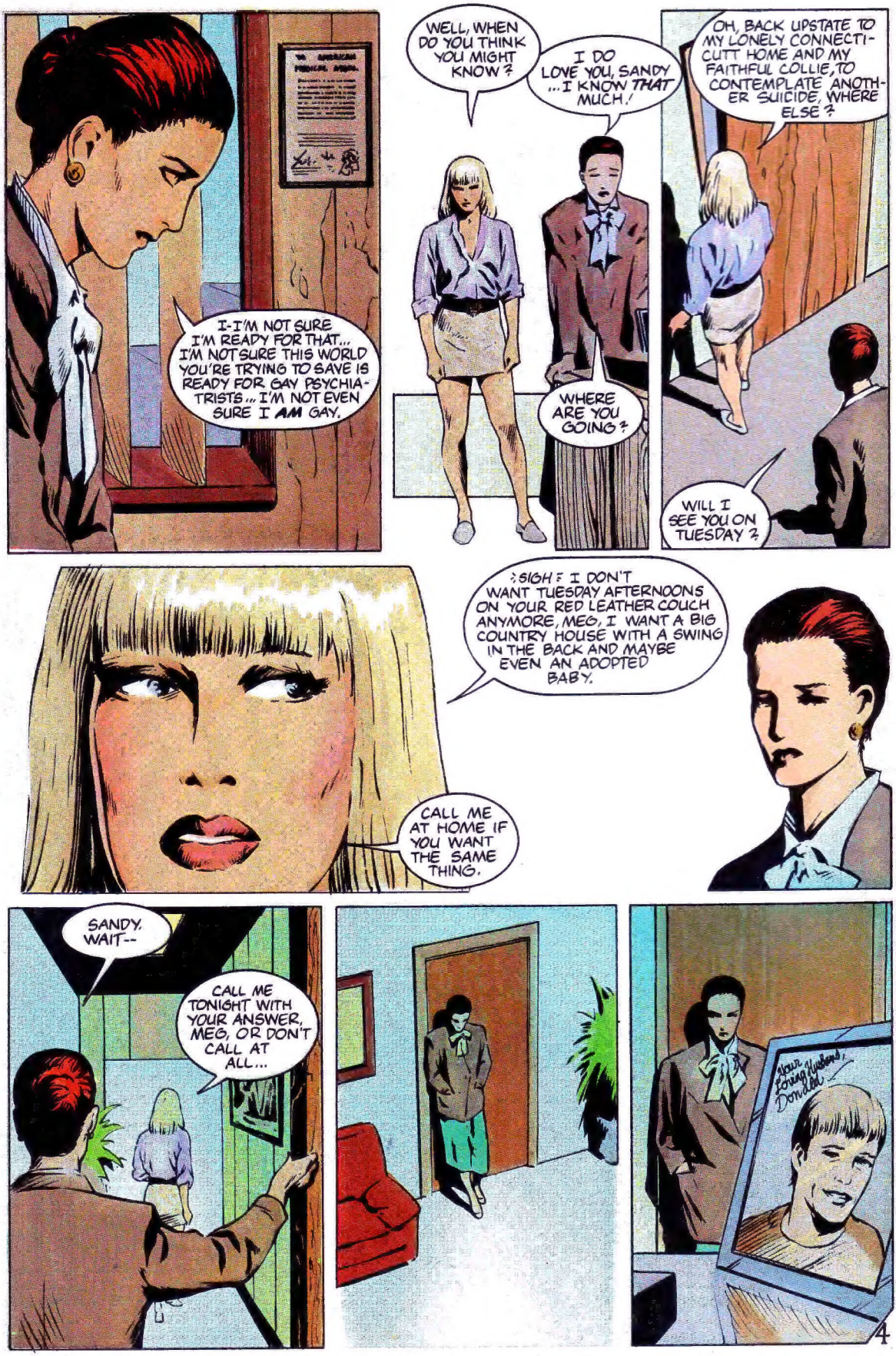
catherine yronwode

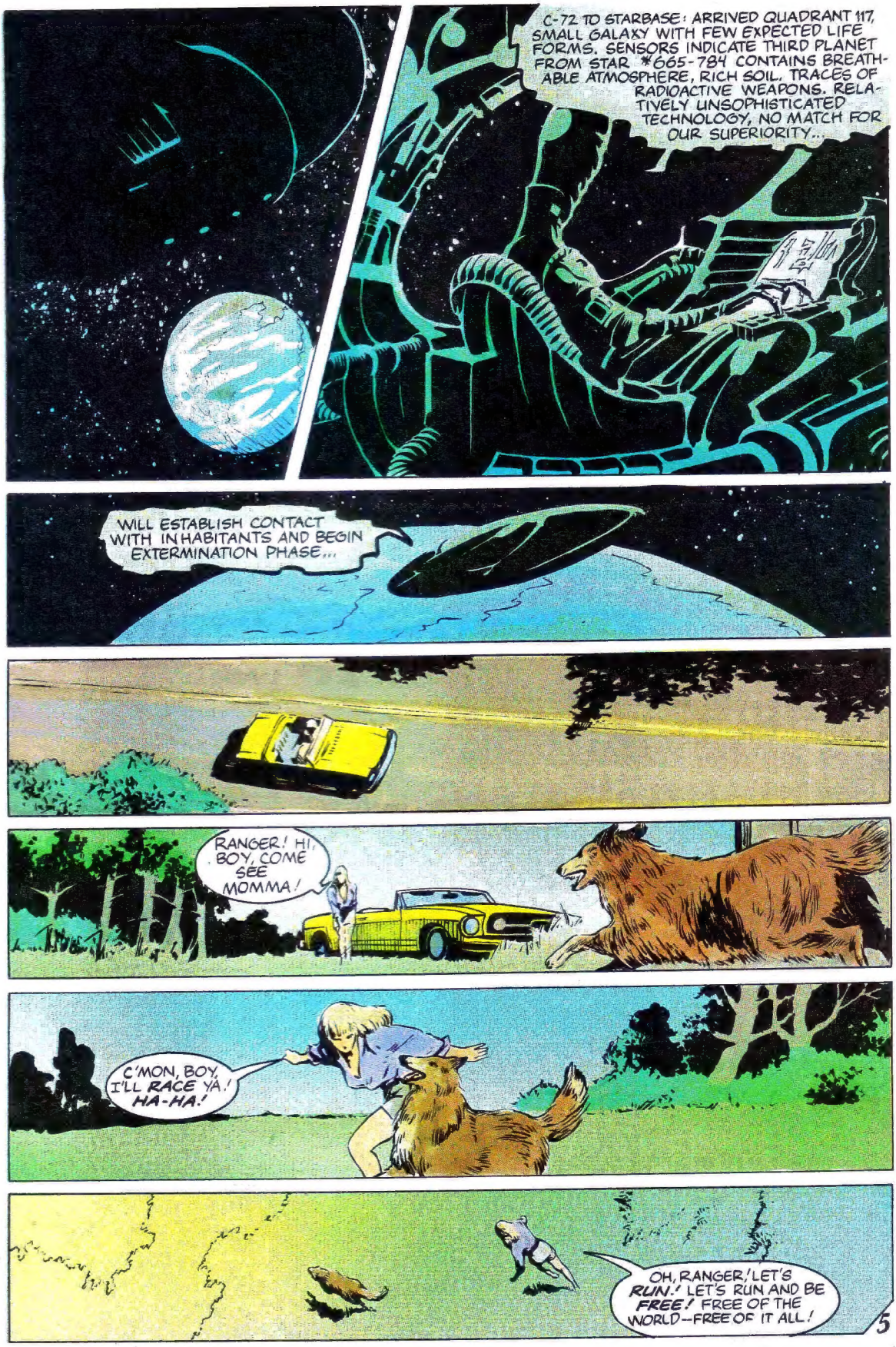
ALIEN ENCOUNTERS™ no. 9, October 1986. Published bi-monthly by Eclipse Comics, P.O. Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. Catherine Yronwode, Editor. Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Cover Art ©1986 John Higgins. The Conquered; story ©1986 Bruce Jones. Art ©1986 John Bolton. Diseased; story ©1986 Douglas Wheeler. Art ©1986 John K. Snyder III. Strangers on a Subway; story ©1986 Howard Zimmerman. Art ©1986 Larry Elmore. An Alien Encounter; story ©1986 Tom Field. Art ©1986 Lee Weeks. Alien Encounters TM Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. All other material ©1986 Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved. Film by SM Graphics. Printed in Canada.

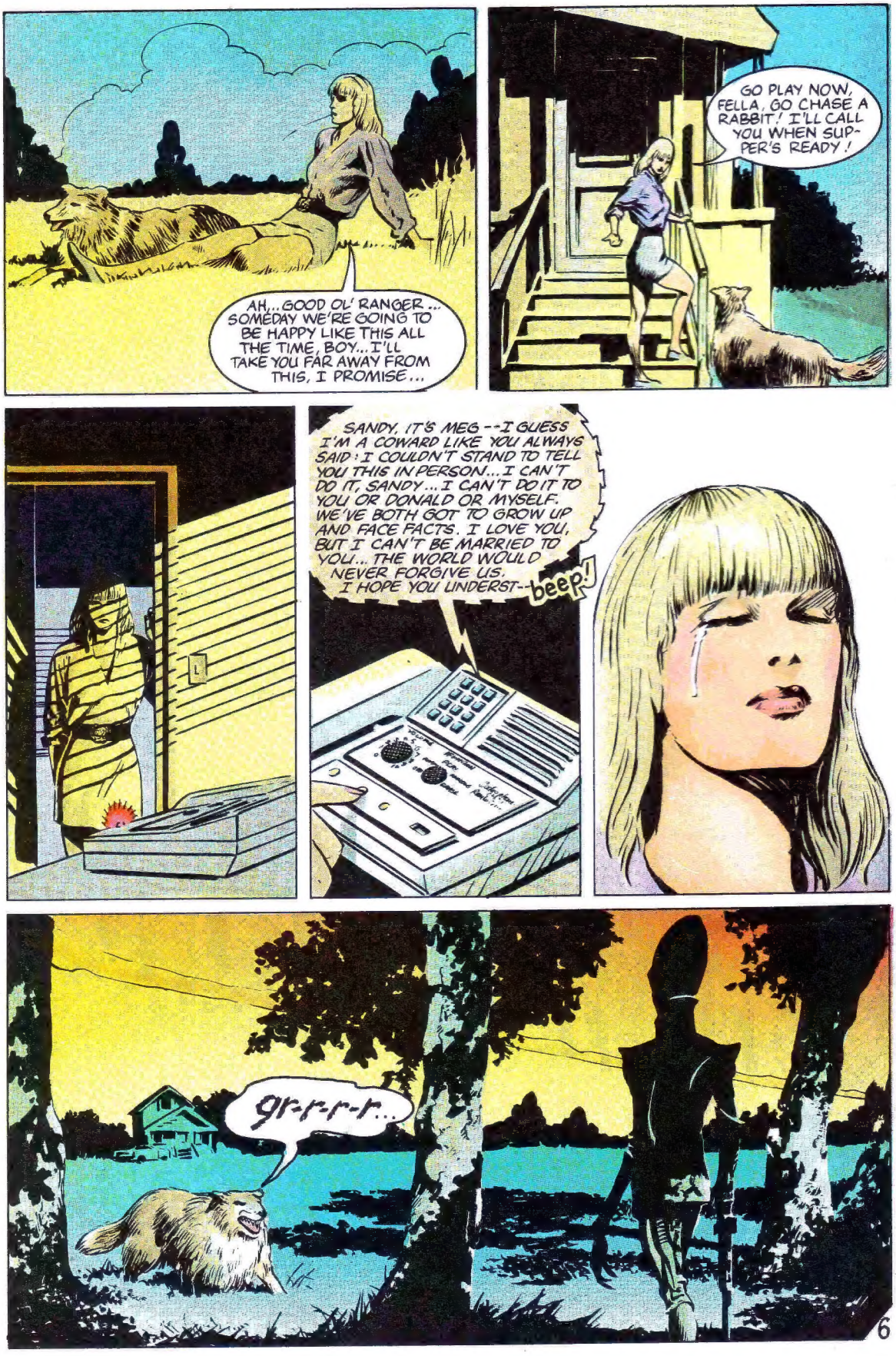

C-72 TO STARBASE: APPROACHING PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE. SENSORS DETECT NO SIGNS OF RADIOACTIVITY EXCEPT FOR THOSE NOMINAL TRACES USUALLY FOUND ON AIR-BREATHING PLANETS LIKE THESE. WE PERCEIVE NO ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY HERE. INHABITANTS UNDOUBTEDLY PRIMITIVE AND EASILY DOMINATED. SOIL RICH AND SUITABLE FOR SEEDING. WILL BEGIN EXTERMINATION STAGE IMMEDIATELY. PREDICT NO RESISTANCE...
The CONQUERED
RIIIIING!
SCRIPT: BRUCE JONES
ART: JOHN BOLTON
LETTERING: KURT HATHAWAY
COLOURING: STEVE OLIFF
YOUR HUSBAND, NO DOUBT
JUST RELAX, THIS WON'T TAKE A MINUTE.

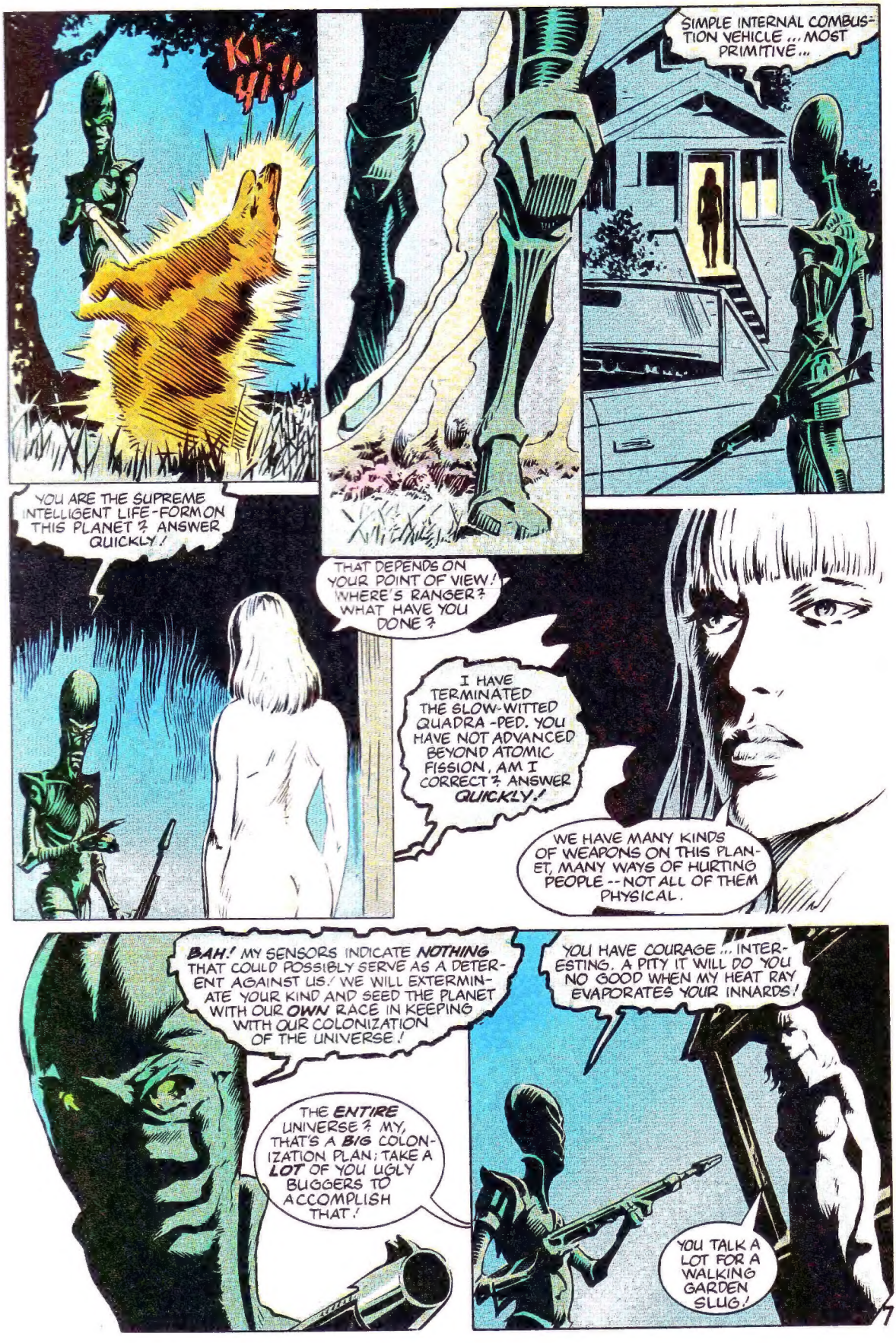

"HELLO? -- YES, DONALD DARLING, I'M WORKING LATE TONIGHT..."
Shhh. SANDY, BE STILL!
HELLO? UH, YES, DONALD DARLING... YES, I'M WORKING LATE TONIGHT... WHAT? OH, WOULD YOU MIND TERRIBLY, DEAR? I HATE TO HAVE YOU EAT ALONE BUT --ALL RIGHT, DONALD, IF YOU'RE SURE. BON APPETIT.' DON'T WAIT UP.'
BRAVO, BRAVO... YOU LIE WITH GREAT SKILL...
THAT WAS VERY FOOLISH, HE MIGHT HAVE HEARD... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE I'M DOING? I'M GETTING DRESSED. MY HOUR IS UP, DOCTOR.
I TOLD DONALD I'D BE LATE...
DID YOU? GOOD FOR YOU. GOT A HOT DATE WITH ANOTHER PATIENT?
SANDRA, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
"SANDRA"... I LOVE THE WAY YOU TAKE THAT OFFICIOUS TONE WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING PSYCHIATRIST... THEN WHEN YOU'RE KISSING ME, YOU CALL ME SANDY. A LITTLE SCHIZOPHRENIC AREN'T WE, DR. BERNE?
YOU MEAN THE WAY YOU CALL ME "DR. BERNE" WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY AND "MEG" WHEN YOU LOVE ME?
I ALWAYS LOVE YOU. THAT'S THE PROBLEM. I'M A 28 YEAR OLD THREE-TIME SUICIDE ATTEMPTEE IN LOVE WITH HER DYKE PSYCHIATRIST; I CAN'T HOLD A JOB, I CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT, AND I CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN. I ALSO CAN'T SEEM TO KILL MYSELF WITH ANY GREAT SUCCESS. I MAY OR MAY NOT BE A LESBIAN, DEPENDING ON YOUR THESIS.
WHAT IS OUR THESIS, DOCTOR -- EXCUSE ME -- "MEG"?
YOU'RE NOT A LESBIAN, SANDRA. PROBABLY NEITHER AM I. WE'RE JUST LOOKING FOR LOVE, A LITTLE UNDERSTANDING. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT. EVERYONE NEEDS AFFECTION. PERHAPS MAKING LOVE WITH YOU WAS A MISTAKE... WE WON'T AGAIN IF YOU PREFER IT!
GODDAMNIT! YOU'RE THE PSYCHIATRIST! DON'T YOU KNOW?

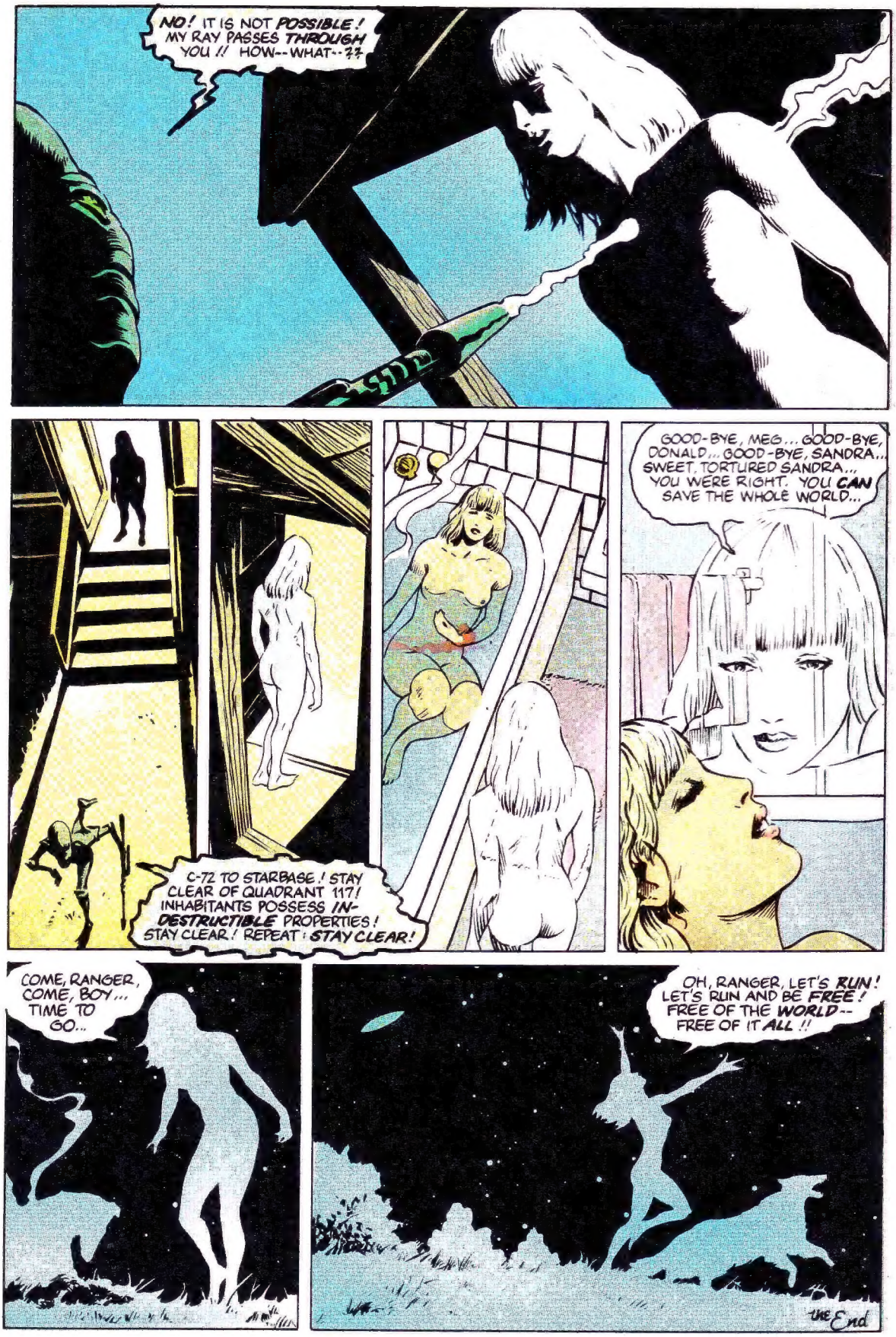
PSYCHIATRISTS DON'T PROVIDE ANSWERS, SANDRA, PATIENTS DO. YOUR PROBLEM ISN'T THAT YOU LOVE ME, BUT THAT YOU HATE YOU...
OH, THAT'S CUTE! THAT'S JUST PAT AS HELL! I REALLY NEEDED TO SHELL OUT EIGHTY DOLLARS AN HOUR AND HAVE MY LIBIDO TURNED INSIDE OUT TO LEARN THAT!
ZZZCHH!
C-72 TO STARBASE: INITIAL EXTERMINATION PHASE COMPLETE. NO RESISTANCE. YOU MAY BEGIN SEEDING PROCEDURE. MOVING ON TO NEXT INTERSTELLAR QUADRANT...
WHAT DO YOU WANT, SANDRA? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHAT DO I WANT... I WANT--I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING, ANYTHING! JUST ONCE IN MY LIFE! SOMETHING IMPORTANT, SOMETHING WITH MEANING... SOMETHING THAT WILL LAST, SOMETHING... OH SHIT, I SOUND LIKE AN IDIOT!
NO YOU DON'T, GO ON...
SOMETHING THAT WILL HELP HUMANITY -- FURTHER THE HUMAN RACE.
;SIGH; YOU CAN'T SAVE THE WHOLE WORLD, SANDY, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU KEEP TRYING TO KILL YOURSELF.
MAYBE I'D STOP TRYING IF I HAD A FUTURE TO CARE ABOUT... AND SOMEONE TO SHARE IT WITH. HOW ABOUT IT, MEG? DO I HAVE SOMEONE TO SHARE IT WITH?
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A COMMITMENT, SANDY...
THAT'S THE WORD FOR IT.


I-I'M NOT SURE I'M READY FOR THAT... I'M NOT SURE THIS WORLD YOU'RE TRYING TO SAVE IS READY FOR GAY PSYCHIATRISTS... I'M NOT EVEN SURE I AM GAY.
WELL, WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT KNOW?
I DO LOVE YOU, SANDY ...I KNOW THAT MUCH.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
OH, BACK UPSTATE TO MY LONELY CONNECTICUTT HOME AND MY FAITHFUL COLLIE, TO CONTEMPLATE ANOTHER SUICIDE, WHERE ELSE?
WILL I SEE YOU ON TUESDAY?
CALL ME AT HOME IF YOU WANT THE SAME THING.
:SIGH: I DON'T WANT TUESDAY AFTERNOONS ON YOUR RED LEATHER COUCH ANYMORE, MEG, I WANT A BIG COUNTRY HOUSE WITH A SWING IN THE BACK AND MAYBE EVEN AN ADOPTED BABY.
SANDY, WAIT--
CALL ME TONIGHT WITH YOUR ANSWER, MEG, OR DON'T CALL AT ALL...
Your Loving Husband, Donald


C-72 TO STARBASE: ARRIVED QUADRANT 117, SMALL GALAXY WITH FEW EXPECTED LIFE FORMS. SENSORS INDICATE THIRD PLANET FROM STAR #665-784 CONTAINS BREATHABLE ATMOSPHERE, RICH SOIL. TRACES OF RADIOACTIVE WEAPONS. RELATIVELY UNSOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY, NO MATCH FOR OUR SUPERIORITY...
WILL ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH INHABITANTS AND BEGIN EXTERMINATION PHASE...
RANGER! HI, BOY, COME SEE MOMMA!
C'MON, BOY, I'LL RACE YA! HA-HA!
OH, RANGER, LET'S RUN! LET'S RUN AND BE FREE! FREE OF THE WORLD--FREE OF IT ALL!

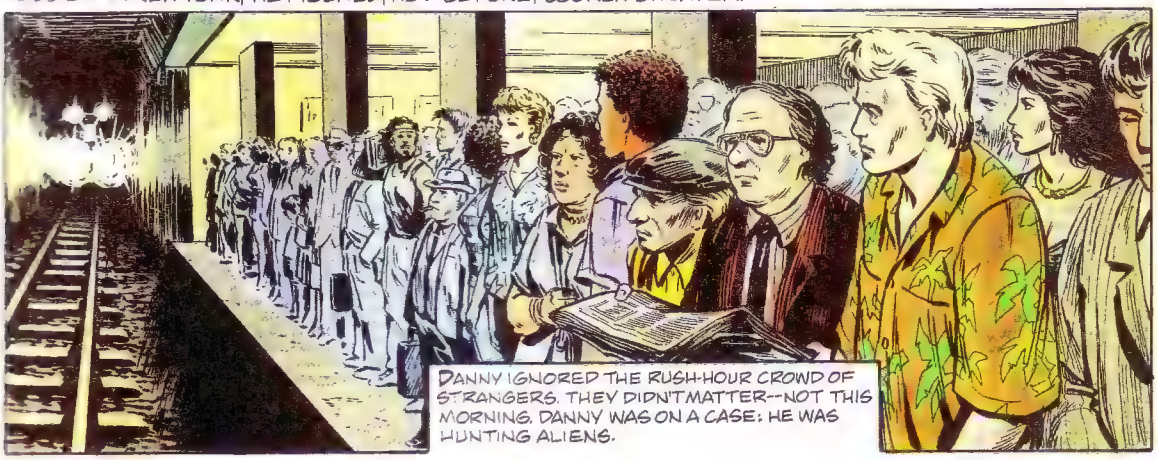

AH,.. GOOD OL' RANGER... SOMEDAY WE'RE GOING TO BE HAPPY LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME, BOY... I'LL TAKE YOU FAR AWAY FROM THIS, I PROMISE...
GO PLAY NOW, FELLA, GO CHASE A RABBIT! I'LL CALL YOU WHEN SUPPER'S READY!
SANDY, IT'S MEG --I GUESS I'M A COWARD LIKE YOU ALWAYS SAID: I COULDN'T STAND TO TELL YOU THIS IN PERSON... I CAN'T DO IT, SANDY... I CAN'T DO IT TO YOU OR DONALD OR MYSELF. WE'VE BOTH GOT TO GROW UP AND FACE FACTS. I LOVE YOU, BUT I CAN'T BE MARRIED TO YOU... THE WORLD WOULD NEVER FORGIVE US. I HOPE YOU UNDERST--
beep!
gr-r-r-r...

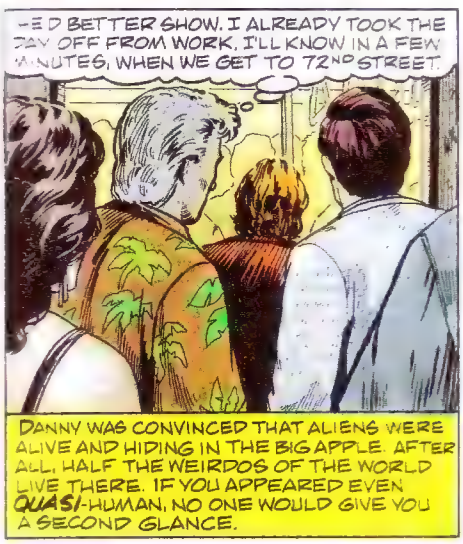

KI-YI!!
SIMPLE INTERNAL COMBUSTION VEHICLE ... MOST PRIMITIVE ...
YOU ARE THE SUPREME INTELLIGENT LIFE-FORM ON THIS PLANET? ANSWER QUICKLY!
THAT DEPENDS ON YOUR POINT OF VIEW! WHERE'S RANGER? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
I HAVE TERMINATED THE SLOW-WITTED QUADRA-PED. YOU HAVE NOT ADVANCED BEYOND ATOMIC FISSION, AM I CORRECT? ANSWER QUICKLY!
WE HAVE MANY KINDS OF WEAPONS ON THIS PLANET, MANY WAYS OF HURTING PEOPLE -- NOT ALL OF THEM PHYSICAL.
BAH! MY SENSORS INDICATE NOTHING THAT COULD POSSIBLY SERVE AS A DETERENT AGAINST US! WE WILL EXTERMINATE YOUR KIND AND SEED THE PLANET WITH OUR OWN RACE IN KEEPING WITH OUR COLONIZATION OF THE UNIVERSE!
THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE? MY, THAT'S A BIG COLONIZATION PLAN; TAKE A LOT OF YOU UGLY BUGGERS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT!
YOU HAVE COURAGE ... INTERESTING. A PITY IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD WHEN MY HEAT RAY EVAPORATES YOUR INNARDS!
YOU TALK A LOT FOR A WALKING GARDEN SLUG!


NO! IT IS NOT POSSIBLE! MY RAY PASSES THROUGH YOU !! HOW--WHAT--??
C-72 TO STARBASE! STAY CLEAR OF QUADRANT 117! INHABITANTS POSSESS INDESTRUCTIBLE PROPERTIES! STAY CLEAR! REPEAT: STAY CLEAR!
GOOD-BYE, MEG... GOOD-BYE, DONALD... GOOD-BYE, SANDRA... SWEET, TORTURED SANDRA... YOU WERE RIGHT. YOU CAN SAVE THE WHOLE WORLD...
COME, RANGER, COME, BOY... TIME TO GO...
OH, RANGER, LET'S RUN! LET'S RUN AND BE FREE! FREE OF THE WORLD-- FREE OF IT ALL !!
THE End

STRANGERS ON A SUBWAY

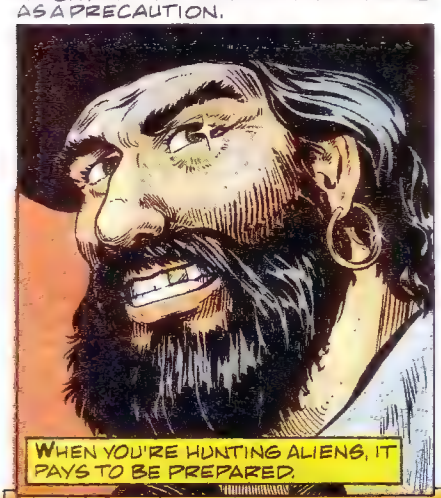
DANNY SORT HUNTED ALIENS. NOT THE EASY TO SPOT, BUG-EYED-MONSTER VARIETY, BUT THOSE SNEAKY OUTWORLDERS WHO TRY TO "PASS" FOR HUMAN. HE HADN'T ACTUALLY **FOUND** ONE YET, BUT AS AN INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER FOR THE SLEAZY TABLOID **UFO**NAUT WEEKLY, HE WAS ABLE TO PURSUE HIS PASSION. IN NEW YORK, HE FIGURED, HE'D GET ONE, SOONER OR LATER.


DANNY IGNORED THE RUSH-HOUR CROWD OF STRANGERS. THEY DIDN'T MATTER--NOT THIS MORNING. DANNY WAS ON A CASE: HE WAS HUNTING ALIENS.


-ED BETTER SHOW. I ALREADY TOOK THE DAY OFF FROM WORK. I'LL KNOW IN A FEW MINUTES, WHEN WE GET TO 72ND STREET.
DANNY WAS CONVINCED THAT ALIENS WERE ALIVE AND HIDING IN THE BIG APPLE. AFTER ALL, HALF THE WEIRDOS OF THE WORLD LIVE THERE. IF YOU APPEARED EVEN *QUASI*-HUMAN, NO ONE WOULD GIVE YOU A SECOND GLANCE.

I'M IN LUCK! THERE HE IS.
OKAY, DANNY BOY, BE COOL. BUT DON'T LOSE HIM.
DANNY HAD BEEN WATCHING THE STRANGER ON THE SUBWAY EVERY MORNING FOR TWO WEEKS--SINCE HE FIRST APPEARED. DANNY'S "NOSE FOR NONSENSE" TOLD HIM SOMETHING WAS **ODD** ABOUT THIS GUY, AND DANNY ALWAYS FOLLOWED HIS NOSE.

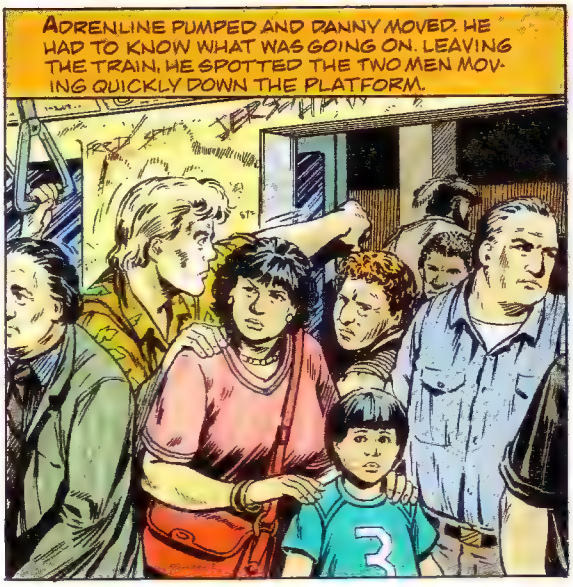
THE STRANGER MADE HIM UNEASY CASUALLY, DANNY PUT HIS HAND IN HIS POCKET AND FELT THE REASSURING WEIGHT OF THE .22 HE'D TAKEN ALONG AS A PRECAUTION.

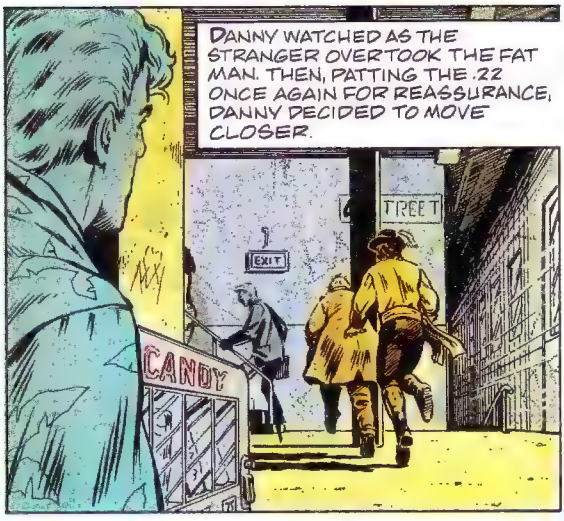


DANNY WAS THINKING ABOUT ALIEN SHIPS CRASHLANDING ON EARTH AND HOW HUMANOID AN ALIEN MIGHT LOOK, WHEN HE NOTICED THE REVOLTING LOOKING MAN AT WHOM HIS STRANGER WAS STARING.
UGH.! NEW YORK WEIRDOS ARE GETTING SCUZZIER. THAT ONE DOESN'T EVEN LOOK **HUMAN**. HMMM. MAYBE I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE WRONG MAN!

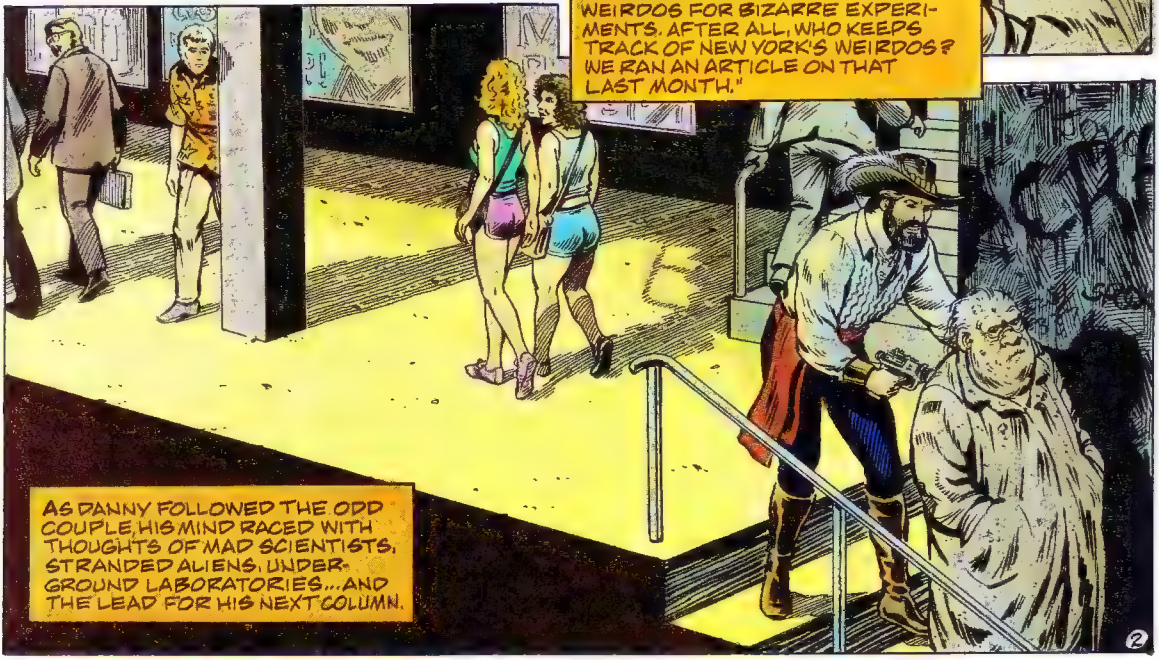
HOWARD ZIMMERMAN *SCRIPT* • LARRY ELMORE *ART* • WAYNE TRUMAN *LETTERING* • STEVE OLIFF *COLOURING*

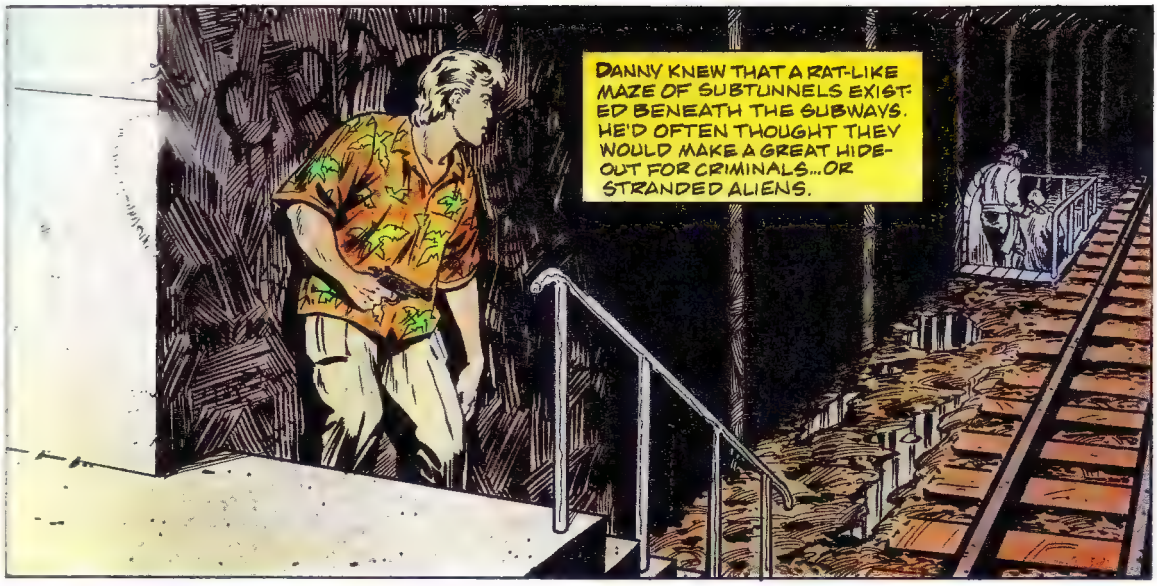
THE FAT MAN BOLTED FROM THE TRAIN AT 42ND STREET. BUT DANNY'S STRANGER WAS IN HOT PURSUIT!


ADRENLINE PUMPED AND DANNY MOVED. HE HAD TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. LEAVING THE TRAIN, HE SPOTTED THE TWO MEN MOVING QUICKLY DOWN THE PLATFORM.


DANNY WATCHED AS THE STRANGER OVERTOOK THE FAT MAN. THEN, PATTING THE .22 ONCE AGAIN FOR REASSURANCE, DANNY DECIDED TO MOVE CLOSER.
STREET
EXIT
CANDY

"THIS ISN'T A MUGGING," DANNY THOUGHT. "IT LOOKS MORE LIKE A KIDNAPPING. MAYBE MY STRANGER'S A MAD SCIENTIST WHO STEALS WEIRDOS FOR BIZARRE EXPERIMENTS. AFTER ALL, WHO KEEPS TRACK OF NEW YORK'S WEIRDOS? WE RAN AN ARTICLE ON THAT LAST MONTH."


AS DANNY FOLLOWED THE ODD COUPLE, HIS MIND RACED WITH THOUGHTS OF MAD SCIENTISTS, STRANDED ALIENS, UNDERGROUND LABORATORIES... AND THE LEAD FOR HIS NEXT COLUMN.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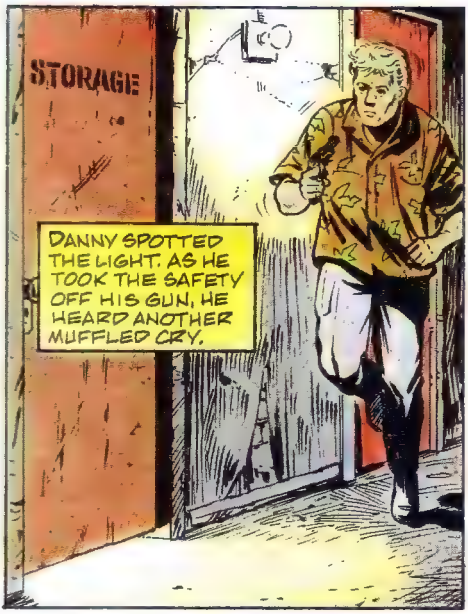
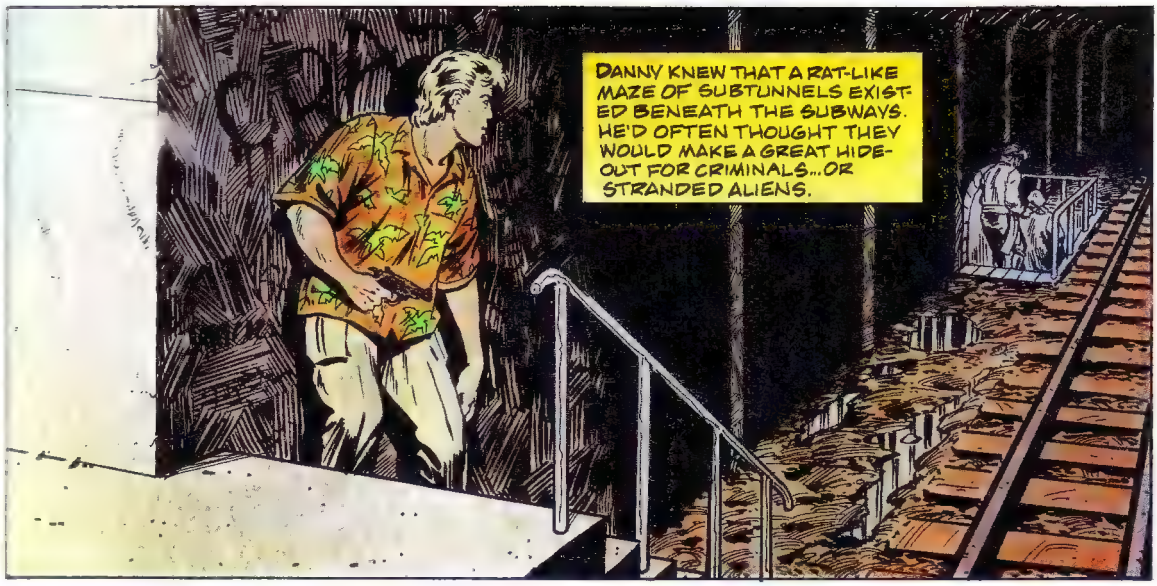
DANNY LOST THEM AROUND A TURN. STRAINING HIS EARS AGAINST THE SILENCE, HE HEARD A MUFFLED CRY FROM HIS LEFT.


STORAGE
DANNY SPOTTED THE LIGHT. AS HE TOOK THE SAFETY OFF HIS GUN, HE HEARD ANOTHER MUFFLED CRY.

...A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE I CAUGHT UP WITH YOU. DON'T WORRY--YOU WON'T FEEL A THING.

THE DOOR WAS UNLOCKED. DANNY PREPARED HIMSELF FOR THE UNKNOWN--AND MADE HIS MOVE.
3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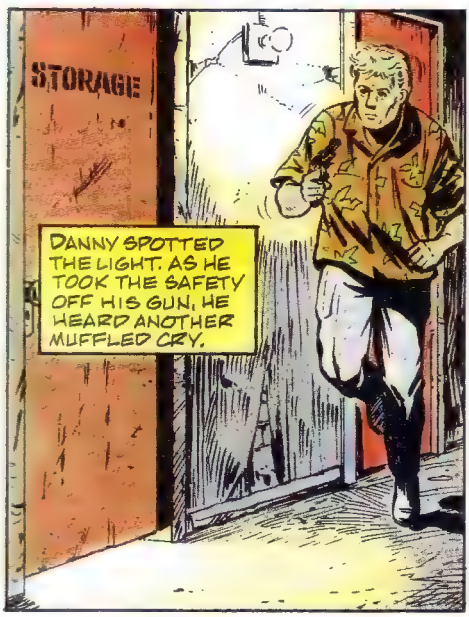

STORAGE
DANNY SPOTTED THE LIGHT. AS HE TOOK THE SAFETY OFF HIS GUN, HE HEARD ANOTHER MUFFLED CRY.

...A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE I CAUGHT UP WITH YOU. DON'T WORRY--YOU WON'T FEEL A THING.

THE DOOR WAS UNLOCKED. DANNY PREPARED HIMSELF FOR THE UNKNOWN--AND MADE HIS MOVE.
3

FREEZE, SUCKER! OR I'LL BLOW YOU AWAY! NOW, DROP THE ZAP GUN AND PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR.
THE STRANGER COMPLIED. DANNY PICKED UP THE ZAP GUN AND POCKETED IT.
DANNY'S GAZE SHIFTED TO THE OTHER PERSON IN THE ROOM. ONLY WHEN HE LOOKED, HE DIDN'T SEE A "PERSON."
HOLY CRUD! I DID IT--I FOUND MY ALIEN!
OKAY, START TALKING! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S THAT THING, AND WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH IT?
I'LL TELL YOU. MIND IF I PUT MY HANDS DOWN?
THE STRANGER DROPPED HIS HANDS SLOWLY AND BEGAN TO TELL DANNY AN INCREDIBLE STORY.
"THE CREATURE IN THE CORNER IS INDEED AN ALIEN," SAID THE STRANGER. "IT IS A KANTH. A KANTH PATROL SHIP WAS ATTACKED HIGH ABOVE EARTH BY THEIR BITTER ENEMIES, THE DROX. IT CRASHED SOMEWHERE NEAR SIBERIA. THERE WERE ABOUT A HUNDRED SURVIVORS.
"EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A BRUTAL SNEAK ATTACK, THEY MANAGED TO DAMAGE THE DROX SAUCER. IT CRASHED, TOO, SOMEWHERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD. ONLY THE PILOT SURVIVED."
4

BUT SINCE THEN, THE DROX HAS BEEN HUNTING DOWN THE KANTH SURVIVORS AND KILLING THEM HORRIBLY, ONE AT A TIME. YOU SEE, AMONG THOSE WHO DIED IN THE CRASH WERE THE DROX PILOT'S MATE AND OFFSPRING.

BEFORE I PUT A BULLET IN YOUR EAR, TELL ME WHO YOU ARE! ARE YOU THE **DROX**? IS **THAT** WHY YOU WERE STALKING THAT PATHETIC CREATURE?

DON'T WORRY. I'M HUMAN. BUT I'M FROM ***THE FUTURE***. I'M AN EXO-BIOLOGIST FROM THE YEAR 2157. ALIENS ARE MY SPECIALTY.

GO AHEAD. LET'S HEAR THE REST OF IT.

SSD-23

"IN THE YEAR 2002 (WAY BEFORE I WAS BORN), EARTH WAS VISITED BY MEMBERS OF A GROUP OF ADVANCED ALIEN RACES FROM OUR GALACTIC NEIGHBORHOOD."

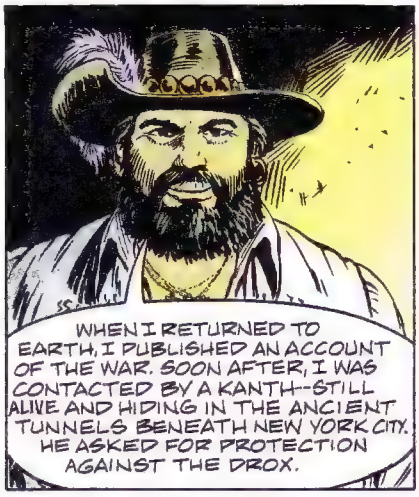
"THEY REPRESENTED THE SPIRAL SECTOR DIRECTORATE, WHICH HAD BEEN SPREADING THROUGH THE MILKY WAY FOR CENTURIES AND INCLUDED BEINGS FROM OVER A HUNDRED PLANETS. EARTH WAS INVITED TO JOIN."

"EARTH ACCEPTED, OF COURSE. IN 2150 I WAS GIVEN THE JOB OF CATALOGING ALL KNOWN ALIEN SPECIES FOR THE ENCYCLOPEDIA GALACTICA."

"IT WAS DURING MY RESEARCH, IN A LIBRARY ON CETUS-4, THAT I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE DROX-KANTH WAR."

"THE DROX WERE FEARED WORLD CONQUERERS AND THOUGHT THE GENTLE KANTH WOULD BE EASY VICTIMS. BUT EVEN THE GENTLEST OF BEINGS WILL FIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR HOMES."

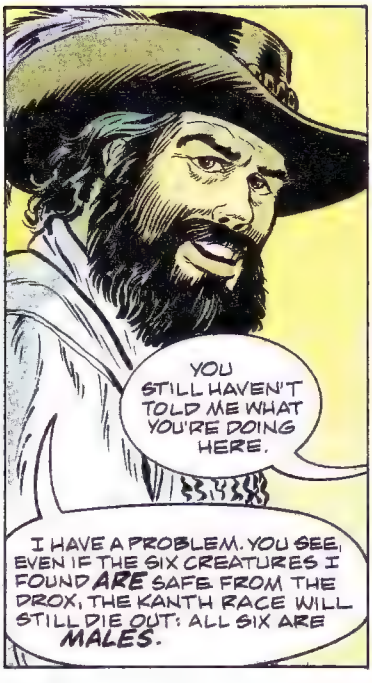
"IT WAS A BITTERLY FOUGHT STRUGGLE THAT, IN THE END, WIPED OUT BOTH RACES AND DESTROYED THEIR HOME PLANETS."


WHEN I RETURNED TO EARTH, I PUBLISHED AN ACCOUNT OF THE WAR. SOON AFTER, I WAS CONTACTED BY A KANTH--STILL ALIVE AND HIDING IN THE ANCIENT TUNNELS BENEATH NEW YORK CITY. HE ASKED FOR PROTECTION AGAINST THE DROX.

"IT TURNED OUT THAT SIX KANTH WERE STILL ALIVE AND HIDING IN THE TUNNELS. I TOOK THEM ALL IN. THEY HAD BEEN LIVING IN SHEER TERROR, FEARING THE DROX WOULD FIND AND KILL THEM.

"I PLACED THEM UNDER TIGHT SECURITY AND INFORMED THE SPIRAL SECTOR SCIENCE COUNCIL. I WAS GIVEN THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL FOR FINDING SIX MEMBERS OF A RACE THOUGHT TO BE EXTINCT."

DID YOU EVER FIND THE DROX, BY THE WAY?
NO.
MAYBE IT DIED.
WE THINK NOT. IT'S AN EXTREMELY LONG-LIVED AND SINGLE-MINDED HUNTER. QUITE SELF-SUFFICIENT AND MUCH MORE HUMANOID THAN THE KANTH. IT'S EASIER FOR THE DROX TO BLEND IN HERE.

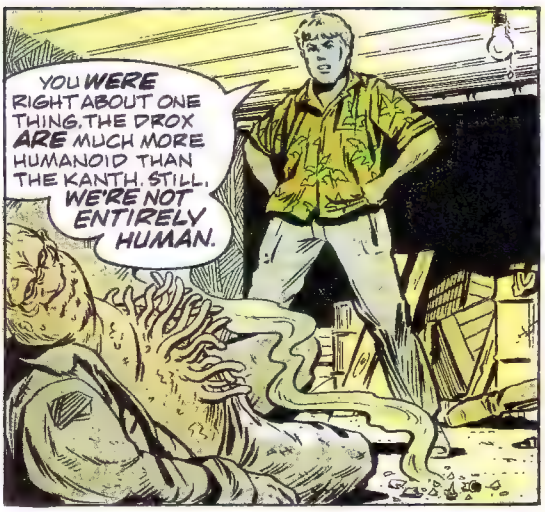

YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE.
I HAVE A PROBLEM. YOU SEE, EVEN IF THE SIX CREATURES I FOUND ARE SAFE FROM THE DROX, THE KANTH RACE WILL STILL DIE OUT: ALL SIX ARE MALES.

THE COUNCIL SENT ME BACK IN TIME TO FIND A FEMALE KANTH, BEFORE THE DROX HAD DESTROYED THEM ALL. AND I HAVE, AS YOU CAN SEE.

YOU'RE TAKING HER BACK TO THE FUTURE WITH YOU? IS THAT IT?
CAN'T. MACHINE'S SET FOR MY MASS, ALONE. BUT I HAVE BROUGHT SOMETHING WITH ME THAT SHOULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM.
WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?
THE CLEAR-LOOKING ONE IS FILLED WITH ESSENCE OF MALE KANTH MUSK. WHEN A FEMALE BREATHES, IT SHE BECOMES TOTALLY PASSIVE AND FULLY RECEPTIVE TO MATING.
THE OTHER CONTAINS KANTH SPERM COLLECTED FROM THE SIX MALES. IF I CAN SUCCESSFULLY IMPREGNATE THIS FEMALE, THE KANTH RACE WILL BE REBORN.
WELL, HAVE I CONVINCED YOU? WILL YOU HELP ME TO STOP THE KANTH RACE FROM DYING?
7

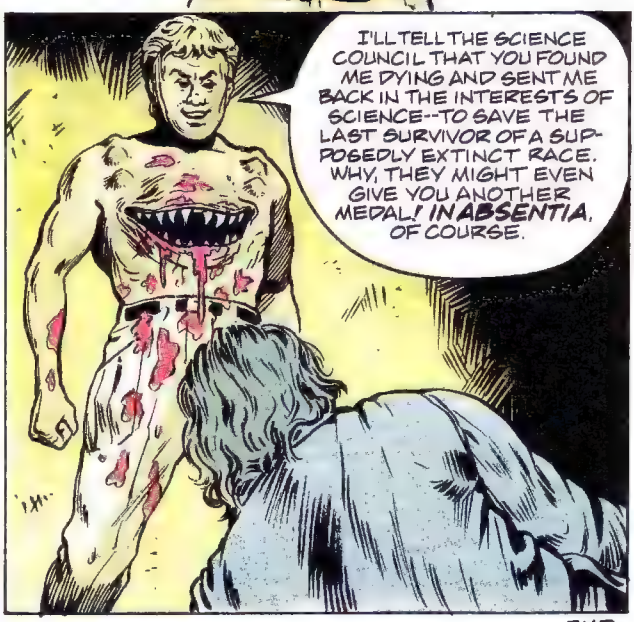
NO, I DON'T THINK WE'LL DO THAT, AT ALL. I'M FINALLY GOING TO GET RID OF THE STINKING KANTH RACE FOR GOOD!
BLAM

FIRST, I'LL FINISH OFF THIS FEMALE. ONE WHIFF OF THIS STUFF AND SHE'LL BE HELPLESS.


YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING, THE DROX ARE MUCH MORE HUMANOID THAN THE KANTH. STILL, WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY HUMAN.

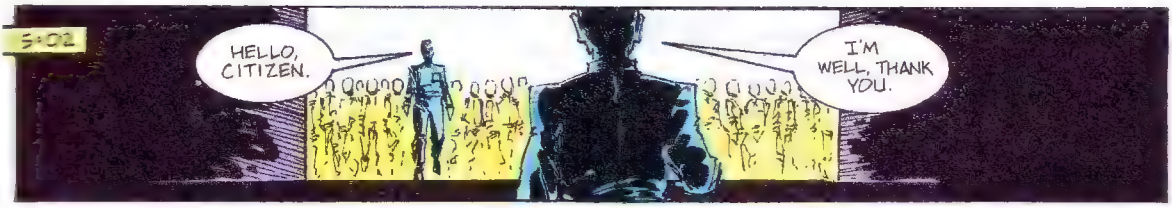
YOU DID KNOW THAT WE EAT OUR VICTIMS, DIDN'T YOU?

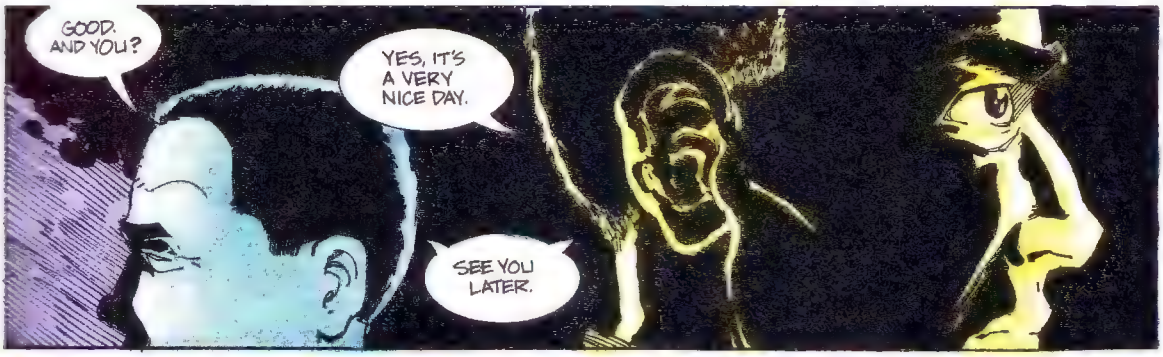
IS THAT TO BE MY FATE, THEN? TO BE EATEN BY AN ALIEN IN A DECAYING SUBWAY TUNNEL, HUNDREDS OF YEARS BEFORE I WAS BORN?
OH, NO. I'M SAVING YOU. AFTER ALL, YOU FOUND SIX KANTH WHOM I MISSED. AND YOU'RE GONNA' HELP ME GET TO THEM, WITH YOUR TIME-TRAVEL DEVICE.


I'LL TELL THE SCIENCE COUNCIL THAT YOU FOUND ME DYING AND SENT ME BACK IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE--TO SAVE THE LAST SURVIVOR OF A SUPPOSEDLY EXTINCT RACE. WHY, THEY MIGHT EVEN GIVE YOU ANOTHER MEDAL! IN ABSENTIA, OF COURSE.

END

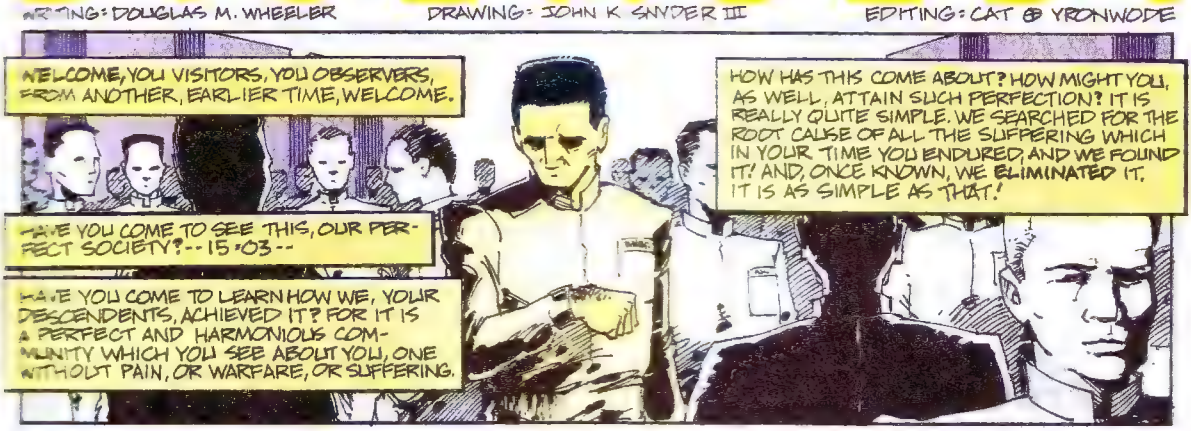
an ALIEN ENCOUNTER...
HELP!
GULP!
HELP!
STORY & ART:
TOM FIELD ~ LEE WEEKS
COLOR:
MARCUS DAVID

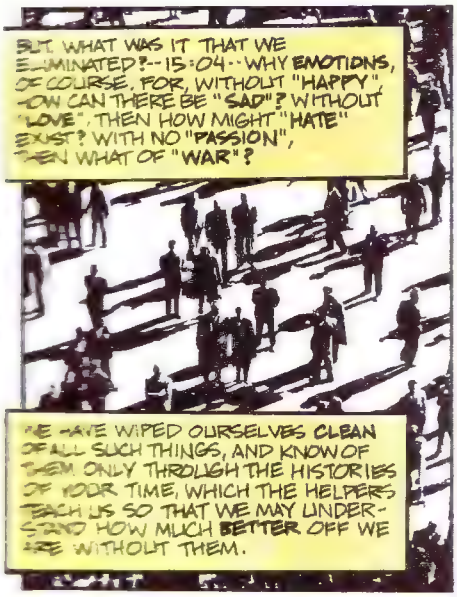


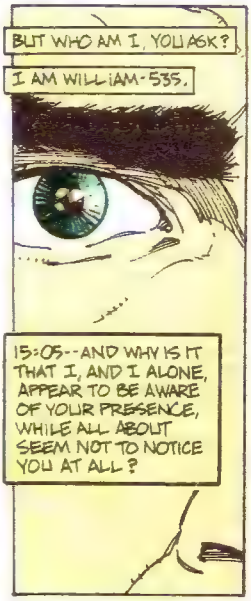


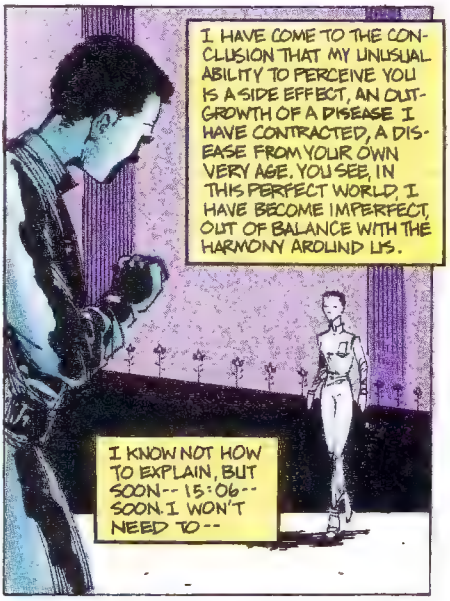
DISEASED!

WRITING: DOUGLAS M. WHEELER DRAWING: JOHN K. SNYDER III EDITING: CAT & YRONWODE

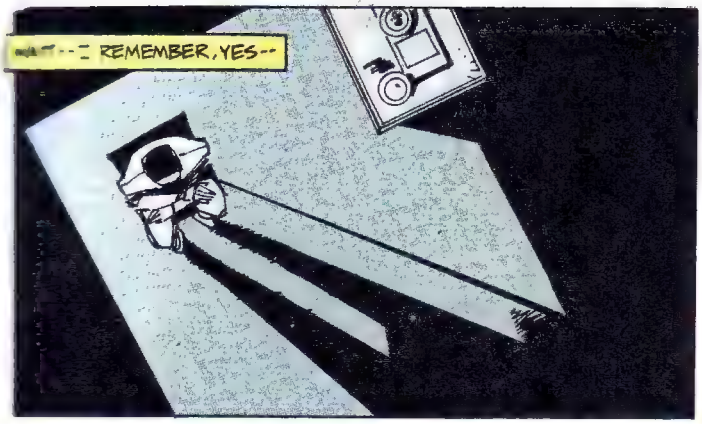

WELCOME, YOU VISITORS, YOU OBSERVERS, FROM ANOTHER, EARLIER TIME, WELCOME.
HAVE YOU COME TO SEE THIS, OUR PERFECT SOCIETY?--15:03--
HAVE YOU COME TO LEARN HOW WE, YOUR DESCENDENTS, ACHIEVED IT? FOR IT IS A PERFECT AND HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY WHICH YOU SEE ABOUT YOU, ONE WITHOUT PAIN, OR WARFARE, OR SUFFERING.
HOW HAS THIS COME ABOUT? HOW MIGHT YOU, AS WELL, ATTAIN SUCH PERFECTION? IT IS REALLY QUITE SIMPLE. WE SEARCHED FOR THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL THE SUFFERING WHICH IN YOUR TIME YOU ENDURED, AND WE FOUND IT! AND, ONCE KNOWN, WE ELIMINATED IT. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

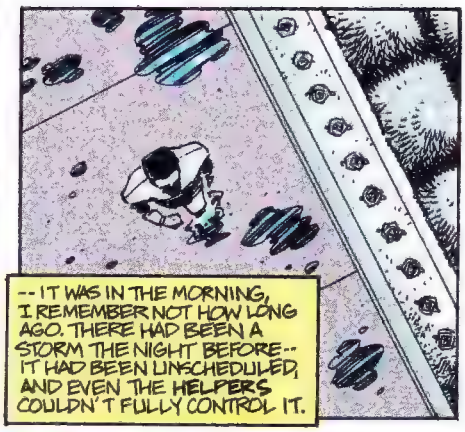

BUT, WHAT WAS IT THAT WE ELIMINATED?--15:04--WHY EMOTIONS, OF COURSE. FOR, WITHOUT "HAPPY", HOW CAN THERE BE "SAD"? WITHOUT "LOVE", THEN HOW MIGHT "HATE" EXIST? WITH NO "PASSION", THEN WHAT OF "WAR"?
WE HAVE WIPED OURSELVES CLEAN OF ALL SUCH THINGS, AND KNOW OF THEM ONLY THROUGH THE HISTORIES OF YOUR TIME, WHICH THE HELPERS TEACH US SO THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH BETTER OFF WE ARE WITHOUT THEM.


BUT WHO AM I, YOU ASK?
I AM WILLIAM-535.
15:05--AND WHY IS IT THAT I, AND I ALONE, APPEAR TO BE AWARE OF YOUR PRESENCE, WHILE ALL ABOUT SEEM NOT TO NOTICE YOU AT ALL?

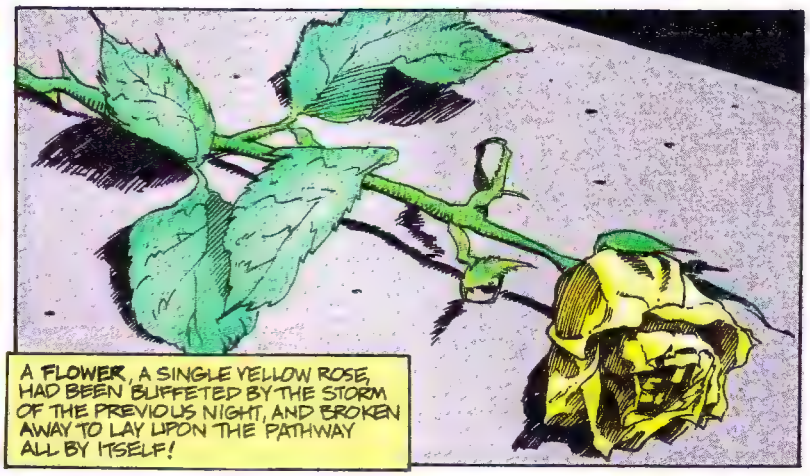

I HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT MY UNUSUAL ABILITY TO PERCEIVE YOU IS A SIDE EFFECT, AN OUTGROWTH OF A DISEASE I HAVE CONTRACTED, A DISEASE FROM YOUR OWN VERY AGE. YOU SEE, IN THIS PERFECT WORLD, I HAVE BECOME IMPERFECT, OUT OF BALANCE WITH THE HARMONY AROUND US.
I KNOW NOT HOW TO EXPLAIN, BUT SOON--15:06--SOON I WON'T NEED TO--

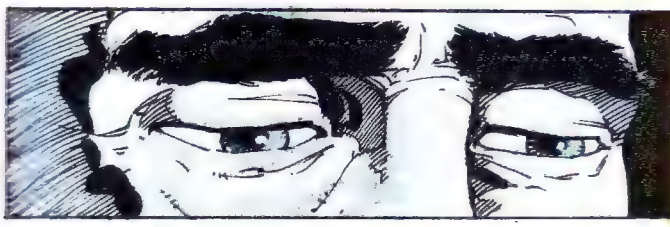
AH! THERE! 15-07!
THERE SHE IS, EXCUSE ME --
HELLO, JOAN!
THANK YOU. I AM FINE. AND YOU?
I'M FINE AS WELL!
YES, THE WEATHER IS CERTAINLY NICE.
JUST LIKE THE DAY BEFORE!
THERE! DID YOU SEE!? DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW? I HAVE CONTRACTED THAT MOST NIGHTMARISH OF DISEASES, ONE WHICH IN YOUR TIME I BELIEVE WAS CLASSIFIED AS "LOVE"!
I UNDERSTAND, FROM THE HISTORIES, THAT THIS DISEASE WAS THE ROOT FROM WHICH ALL OTHER AILMENTS DERIVED. IT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL THE EMOTIONS TO ERADICATE, AND FOR A TIME -- BEFORE THE PERFECTION OF THE SOCIETY BANKS -- HAD EVEN BEEN CONSIDERED NECESSARY FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE SPECIES!
BUT I DIGRESS, AND AM AVOIDING YOUR QUESTIONS. YOU WONDER WHY I HAVE NOT ALLOWED THE HELPERS TO CURE ME OF THIS AWFUL DISEASE. YOU WONDER WHY I HAVE NEGLECTED TAKING MY RATIONS OF APATHEGIN, WHICH MIGHT ALLOW ME TO FORGET HER.
YES, I REALIZE IT IS UNHEALTHY FOR ME TO ALLOW THIS INFECTION TO CONTINUE UNCHECKED. BUT SHE IS SO... SO... WHAT WAS THAT WORD, WHICH YOU ANCIENTS USED SO OFTEN --
-- IT WAS LIKE "NICE", BUT MEANT SO MUCH MORE?
"BEAUTIFUL"! THAT WAS IT, "BEAUTIFUL"! BUT IT IS ONLY A WORD, AND WITHOUT OTHER WORDS TO DEFINE IT, IS MEANINGLESS. HOW THEN MIGHT I EXPLAIN TO YOU THAT I FIND HER "BEAUTIFUL"?
2




--IT WAS IN THE MORNING, I REMEMBER NOT HOW LONG AGO. THERE HAD BEEN A STORM THE NIGHT BEFORE-- IT HAD BEEN UNSCHEDULED, AND EVEN THE HELPERS COULDN'T FULLY CONTROL IT.

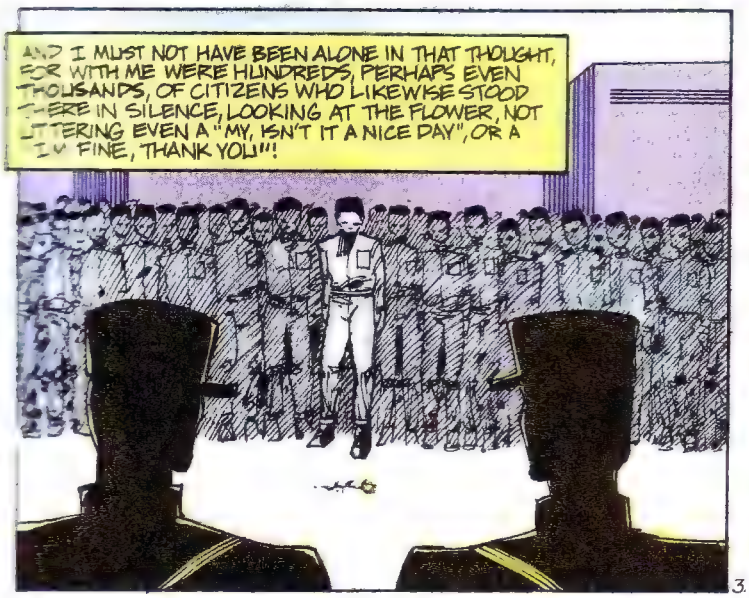
I WAS WALKING ALONG THE BOULEVARDS TO WORK, ADMIRING THE PERFECT STRAIGHT LINES, AND THE UNIFORM RIGHT ANGLES OF OUR STREETS AND BUILDINGS. THERE WAS NOTHING, HOWEVER, THAT THE HELPERS COULD DO WITH THE SUN; "IF ONLY GOD HAD REALISED THE PERFECTION OF STRAIGHT LINES AND RIGHT ANGLES, AND MADE THE SUN SQUARE LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE", THEY WOULD OFTEN SAY, WHEN I NOTICED WHAT AT FIRST APPEARED TO BE DISASTROUS. THE PERFECT SYMMETRY OF OUR CITY, INDEED THE HARMONIOUS BALANCE OF OUR ENTIRE SOCIETY, SEEMED PRECARIOUSLY UPON THE EDGE OF TOTAL DESTRUCTION!

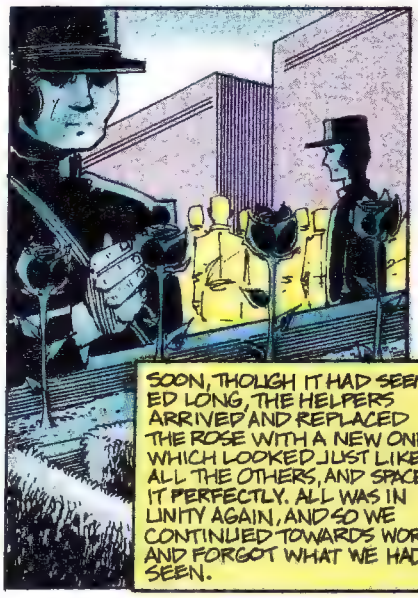

A FLOWER, A SINGLE YELLOW ROSE, HAD BEEN BUFFETED BY THE STORM OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, AND BROKEN AWAY TO LAY UPON THE PATHWAY ALL BY ITSELF!



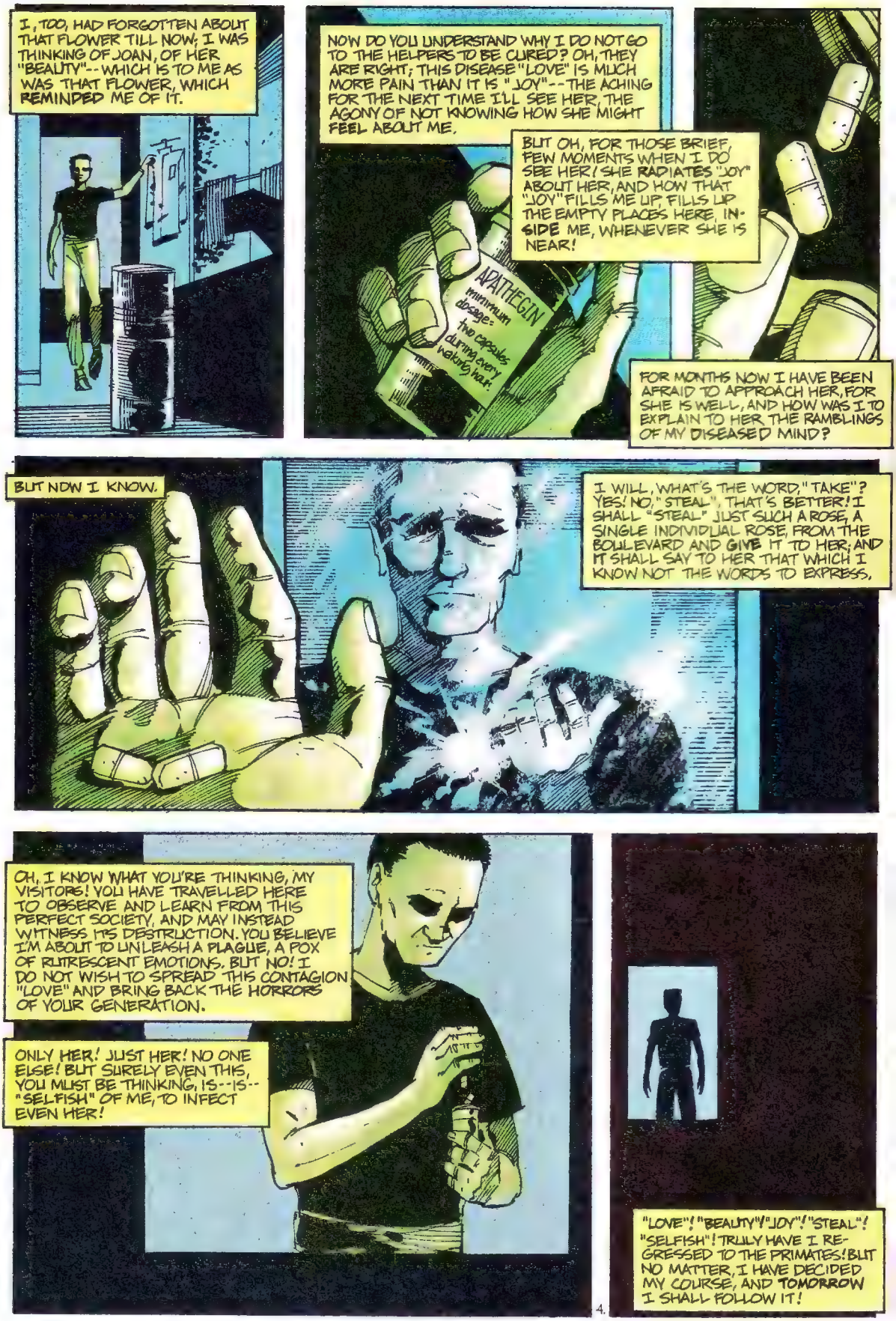
BUT, AS I STARED AT THIS IMPLAUSIBLE, INCONCIEVABLE SIGHT, I WAS SUDDENLY STRUCK BY THE INCREDIBLE "BEAUTY" OF IT! TRUE, WHEN THIS FLOWER HAD BEEN IN UNITY WITH ITS FELLOWS, THE SYMMETRY COLLECTIVELY CREATED HAD BEEN REASSURING AND INSPIRING. BUT NOW, AS IT LAY THERE, ALONE, INDIVIDUAL, I THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS THE MOST "BEAUTIFUL" THING I HAD SEEN IN MY ENTIRE LIFE!

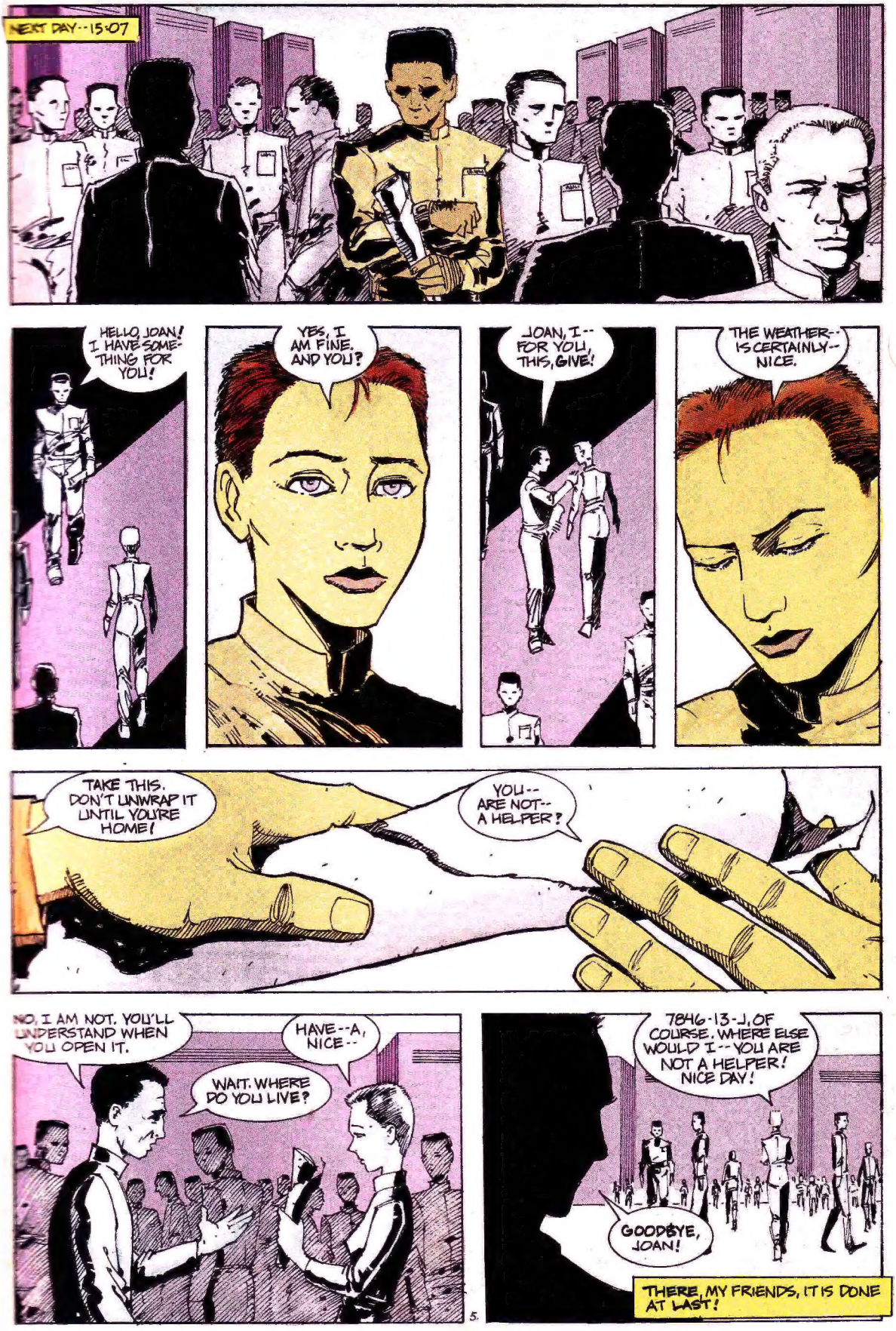
AND I MUST NOT HAVE BEEN ALONE IN THAT THOUGHT, FOR WITH ME WERE HUNDREDS, PERHAPS EVEN THOUSANDS, OF CITIZENS WHO LIKEWISE STOOD THERE IN SILENCE, LOOKING AT THE FLOWER, NOT UTTERING EVEN A "MY, ISN'T IT A NICE DAY", OR A "I'M FINE, THANK YOU!"!

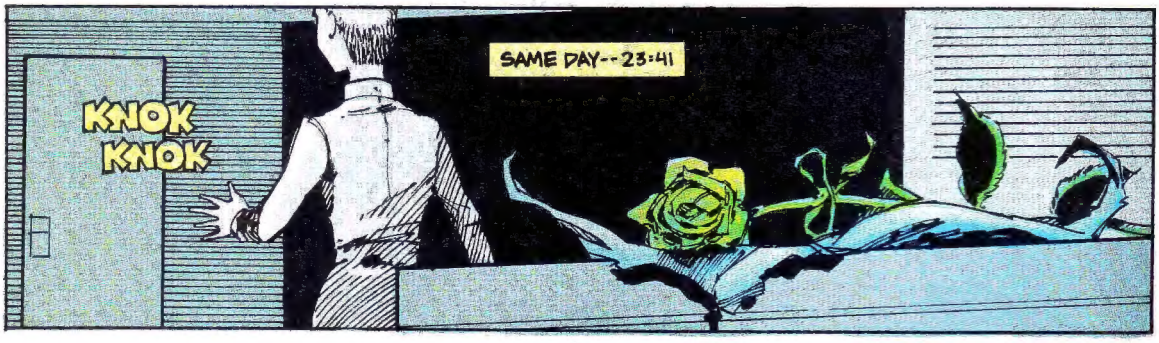




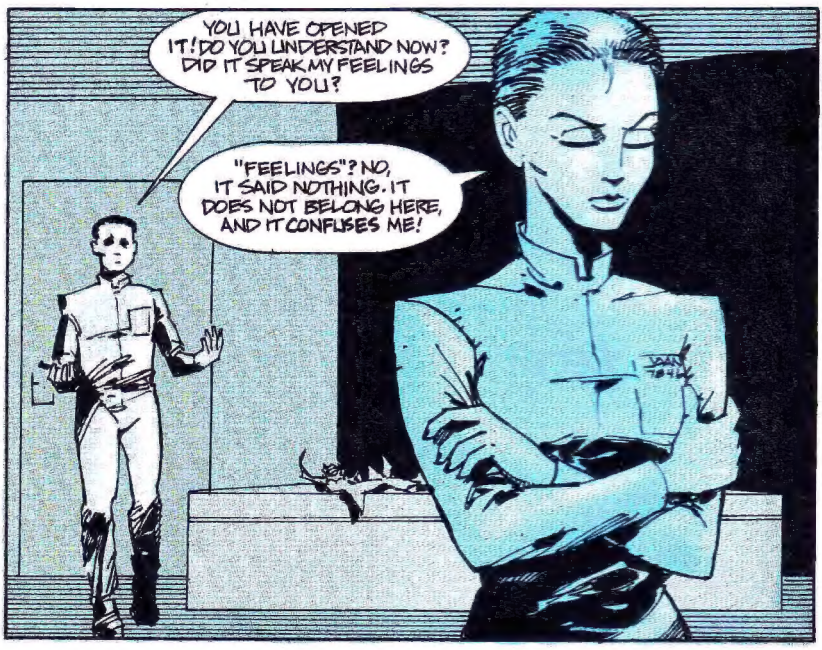
SOON, THOUGH IT HAD SEEMED LONG, THE HELPERS ARRIVED AND REPLACED THE ROSE WITH A NEW ONE, WHICH LOOKED JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHERS, AND SPACED IT PERFECTLY. ALL WAS IN UNITY AGAIN, AND SO WE CONTINUED TOWARDS WORK AND FORGOT WHAT WE HAD SEEN.


I, TOO, HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT THAT FLOWER TILL NOW; I WAS THINKING OF JOAN, OF HER "BEAUTY"--WHICH IS TO ME AS WAS THAT FLOWER, WHICH REMINDED ME OF IT.
NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I DO NOT GO TO THE HELPERS TO BE CURED? OH, THEY ARE RIGHT; THIS DISEASE "LOVE" IS MUCH MORE PAIN THAN IT IS "JOY"--THE ACHING FOR THE NEXT TIME I'LL SEE HER, THE AGONY OF NOT KNOWING HOW SHE MIGHT FEEL ABOUT ME.
BUT OH, FOR THOSE BRIEF, FEW MOMENTS WHEN I DO SEE HER! SHE RADIATES "JOY" ABOUT HER, AND HOW THAT "JOY" FILLS ME UP, FILLS UP THE EMPTY PLACES HERE, INSIDE ME, WHENEVER SHE IS NEAR!
APATHEGIN minimum dosage: two capsules during every waking hour!
FOR MONTHS NOW I HAVE BEEN AFRAID TO APPROACH HER, FOR SHE IS WELL, AND HOW WAS I TO EXPLAIN TO HER THE RAMBLINGS OF MY DISEASED MIND?
BUT NOW I KNOW.
I WILL, WHAT'S THE WORD, "TAKE"? YES! NO, "STEAL", THAT'S BETTER! I SHALL "STEAL" JUST SUCH A ROSE, A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL ROSE, FROM THE BOULEVARD AND GIVE IT TO HER; AND IT SHALL SAY TO HER THAT WHICH I KNOW NOT THE WORDS TO EXPRESS.
OH, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, MY VISITORS! YOU HAVE TRAVELLED HERE TO OBSERVE AND LEARN FROM THIS PERFECT SOCIETY, AND MAY INSTEAD WITNESS ITS DESTRUCTION. YOU BELIEVE I'M ABOUT TO UNLEASH A PLAGUE, A POX OF RUTRESCENT EMOTIONS. BUT NO! I DO NOT WISH TO SPREAD THIS CONTAGION "LOVE" AND BRING BACK THE HORRORS OF YOUR GENERATION.
ONLY HER! JUST HER! NO ONE ELSE! BUT SURELY EVEN THIS, YOU MUST BE THINKING, IS--IS--"SELFISH" OF ME, TO INFECT EVEN HER!
"LOVE"! "BEAUTY"! "JOY"! "STEAL"! "SELFISH"! TRULY HAVE I REGRESSED TO THE PRIMATES! BUT NO MATTER, I HAVE DECIDED MY COURSE, AND TOMORROW I SHALL FOLLOW IT!


NEXT DAY--15:07
HELLO, JOAN! I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU!
YES, I AM FINE. AND YOU?
JOAN, I-- FOR YOU, THIS, GIVE!
THE WEATHER-- IS CERTAINLY-- NICE.
TAKE THIS. DON'T UNWRAP IT UNTIL YOU'RE HOME!
YOU-- ARE NOT-- A HELPER?
NO, I AM NOT. YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU OPEN IT.
HAVE--A, NICE--
WAIT. WHERE DO YOU LIVE?
7846-13-J, OF COURSE. WHERE ELSE WOULD I-- YOU ARE NOT A HELPER! NICE DAY!
GOODBYE, JOAN!
THERE, MY FRIENDS, IT IS DONE AT LAST!


KNOK KNOK
SAME DAY--23:41

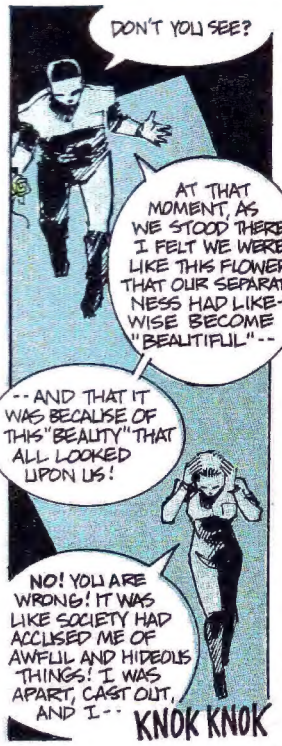
HELLO, JOAN.
YOU!? I WISH TODAY WOULD END AND ALL WOULD BE NORMAL AGAIN! BUT THIS THING THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME PREVENTS THAT!

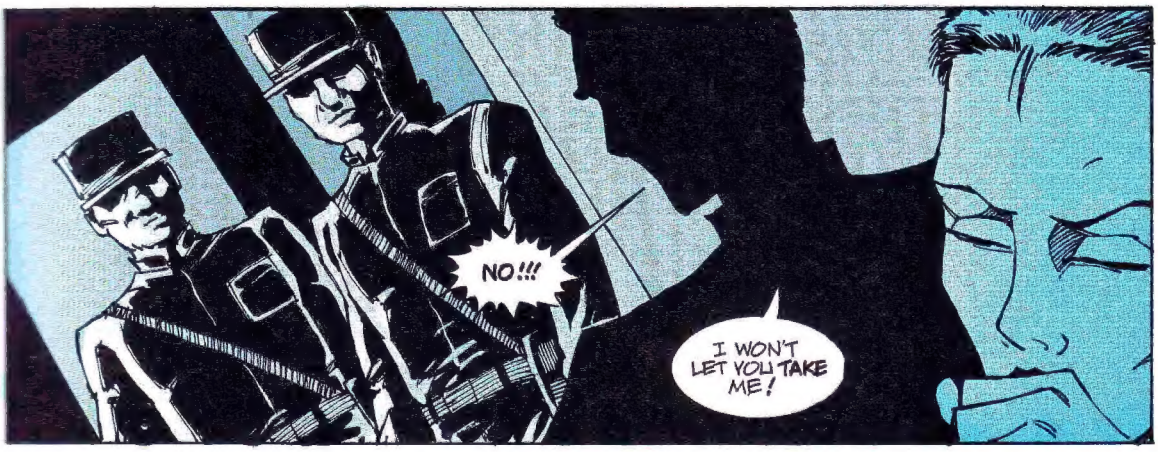

YOU HAVE OPENED IT! DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW? DID IT SPEAK MY FEELINGS TO YOU?
"FEELINGS"? NO, IT SAID NOTHING. IT DOES NOT BELONG HERE, AND IT CONFUSES ME!

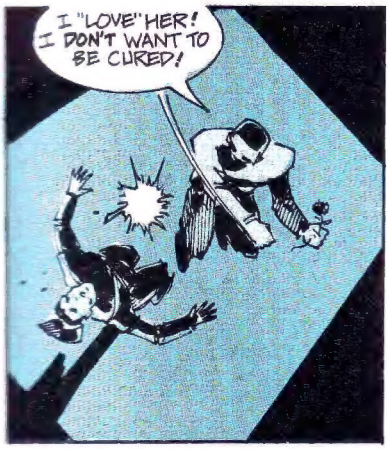
THIS FLOWER IS HOW I SEE YOU, ITS "BEAUTY" DEFINES MY "LOVE" FOR YOU!
"LOVE"!? YOU ARE ILL!

HERE, TAKE SOME APATHEGIN. HOW COULD YOU ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN? DIDN'T YOU FEEL THE STARES WHEN YOU GAVE ME THAT THING!?

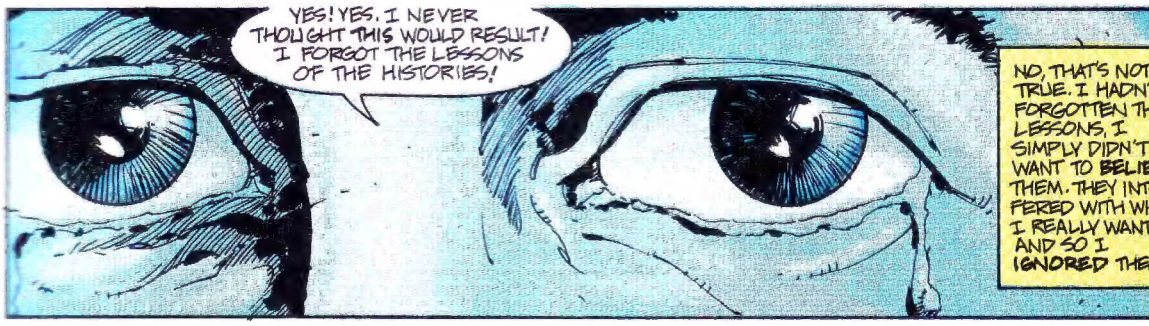
YES, I TOO FELT THE EYES OF SOCIETY--AND, FOR A MOMENT, FELT OUT OF HARMONY. BUT, THEN, I THOUGHT, PERHAPS WE ARE NOT IN DISCORD WITH THE HYMN SOCIAL AT ALL, BUT AN ACCOMPANIMENT TO IT, BLENDING WITH THE OTHERS' UNISON.


DON'T YOU SEE?
AT THAT MOMENT, AS WE STOOD THERE, I FELT WE WERE LIKE THIS FLOWER, THAT OUR SEPARATENESS HAD LIKEWISE BECOME "BEAUTIFUL"--
--AND THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS "BEAUTY" THAT ALL LOOKED UPON US!
NO! YOU ARE WRONG! IT WAS LIKE SOCIETY HAD ACCUSED ME OF AWFUL AND HIDEOUS THINGS! I WAS APART, CAST OUT, AND I--
KNOK KNOK

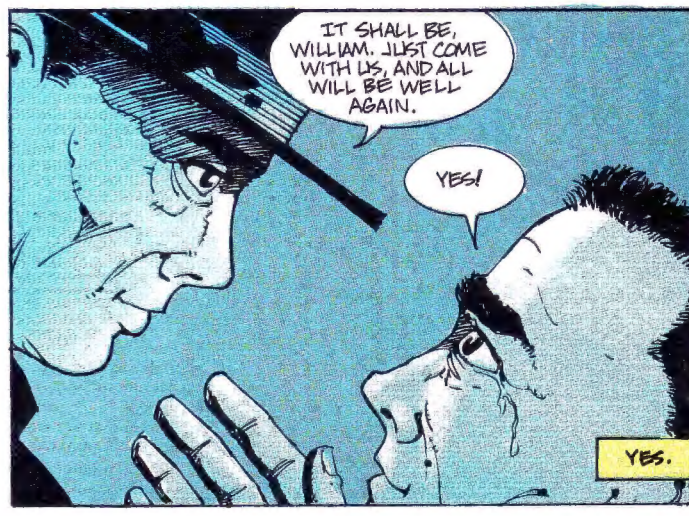

NO!!!
I WON'T LET YOU TAKE ME!

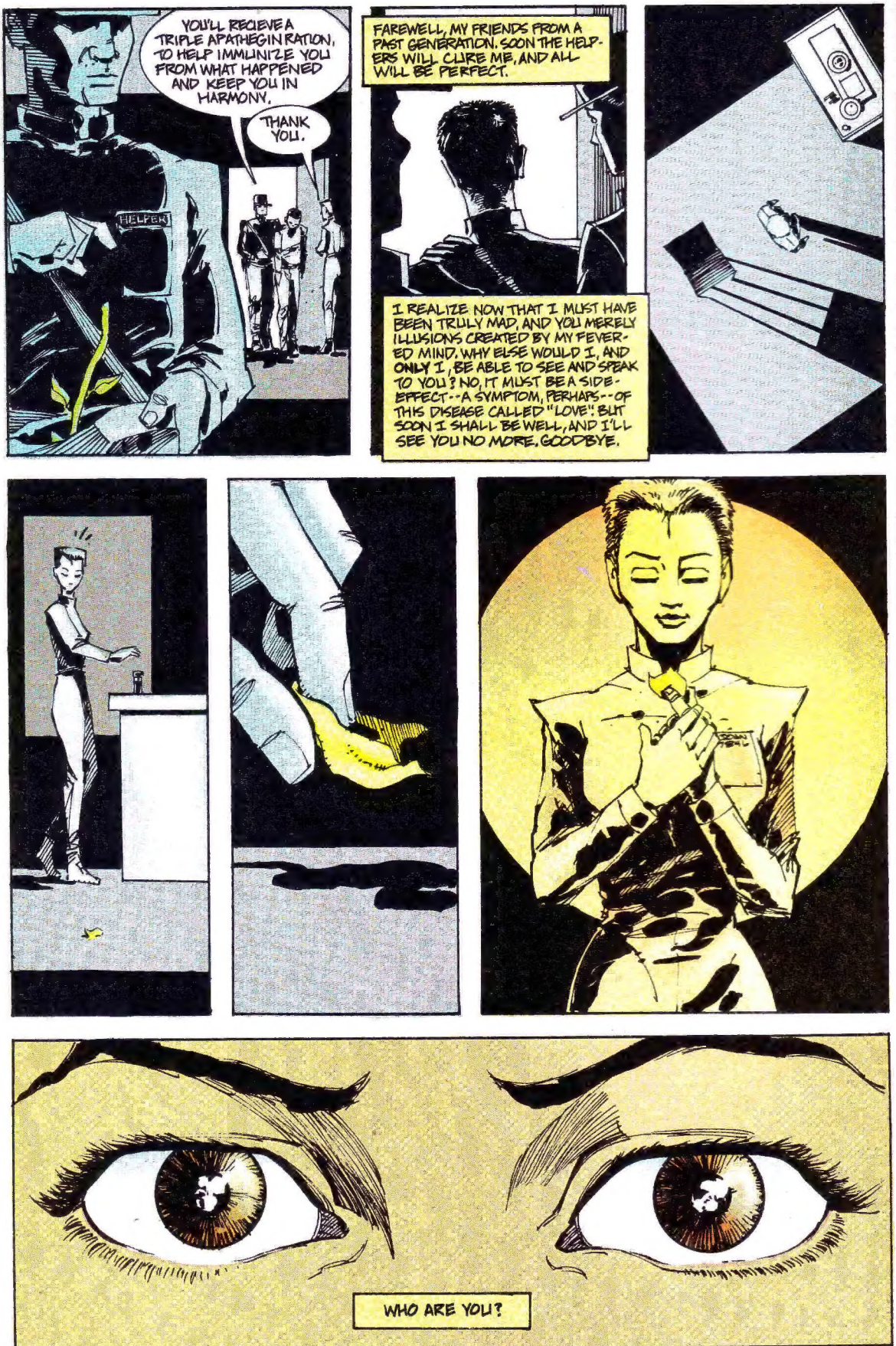

I "LOVE" HER! I DON'T WANT TO BE CURED!

IT IS GOOD, JOAN-7846, THAT YOU CALLED US, AS YOU SEE, EMOTIONS, ALL EMOTIONS, EVEN "LOVE", LEAD ONLY TO PAIN AND VIOLENCE IN THE END. WE ARE MUCH BETTER OFF WITHOUT THEM. DO YOU SEE THAT NOW, WILLIAM?


YES! YES. I NEVER THOUGHT THIS WOULD RESULT! I FORGOT THE LESSONS OF THE HISTORIES!
NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE. I HADN'T FORGOTTEN THE LESSONS, I SIMPLY DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE THEM. THEY INTERFERED WITH WHAT I REALLY WANTED, AND SO I IGNORED THEM.

OH, THANK YOU! THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH FOR CALLING THE HELPERS! PLEASE FORGIVE ME, I WANT ONLY FOR EVERYTHING TO BE AS IT WAS! I WANT ONLY FOR ALL TO BE IN HARMONY!


IT SHALL BE, WILLIAM. JUST COME WITH US, AND ALL WILL BE WELL AGAIN.
YES!
YES.


YOU'LL RECIEVE A TRIPLE APATHEGIN RATION, TO HELP IMMUNIZE YOU FROM WHAT HAPPENED AND KEEP YOU IN HARMONY.
THANK YOU.
HELPER
FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS FROM A PAST GENERATION. SOON THE HELPERS WILL CURE ME, AND ALL WILL BE PERFECT.
I REALIZE NOW THAT I MUST HAVE BEEN TRULY MAD, AND YOU MERELY ILLUSIONS CREATED BY MY FEVERED MIND. WHY ELSE WOULD I, AND ONLY I, BE ABLE TO SEE AND SPEAK TO YOU? NO, IT MUST BE A SIDE-EFFECT--A SYMPTOM, PERHAPS--OF THIS DISEASE CALLED "LOVE". BUT SOON I SHALL BE WELL, AND I'LL SEE YOU NO MORE. GOODBYE.
WHO ARE YOU?
· END ·